



MOHAN TO MAHATMA WITH SPECIAL ORIENTATION TO PARTAP SHARMA'S PLAY – SAMMY

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Abstract - Mohan Das Karam Chand, an ordinary lawyer, who could not have words to speak in the court for his first case as a lawyer is transformed into Mahatma who, like a pied piper, took the whole India with him in his struggle for India's dominion status as a free independent country. It was this Mahatma who is always revered for his greatness, not only by the people of India but by the whole world. In order to make a clinical analysis of the entire process of the transformation of a simple person M. K. Gandhi into a great soul Mahatma Gandhi, the playwright has selected certain crucial incidents - from his South Africa trip in 1893 at the age of 23 till his death in 1948. These incidents shook the conscience of M. K. Gandhi compelled him to deeply think on a higher level as a man, and thereby to go higher and higher in the spiritual world. As a result, he learnt to face and solve even the complicated social and political problems faced by Indian people with his powerful weapons of truth and non-violence. The researcher has tried to critically examine the structure of the play in the light of this process of transformation and thereby bring out the literary significance of the play and the dramatic achievements of the playwright.

Keywords – Simultaneity, Brechtian, Stanislavsky Method

Some men changed their times... one man changed the world for all times. That one man was Gandhi who changed the world by inspiring innumerable persons to follow his path. Mr. Ramin Jahanbegloo in his article in *The Hindu* remarks, "Thanks to the Gandhian legacy of dissent, critical questioning continues to remain the only urgent need by humanity today" (Jahanbegloo 9). The unique personality of Gandhi inspired Partap Sharma to present his evolution from an ordinary lawyer to the sublimated status of a Mahatma in the form of the play *Sammy*. Shaheen Parkar of *MID DAY*, Mumbai, rightly observes:

Playwright Partap Sharma's painstakingly drafted *Sammy* . . . delves into the irrepressible mischievousness of the Mahatma in Mohandas . . . takes a look at lesser-known incidents of Gandhi's life. The script is a veritable guide which will make people learn – and unlearn – various aspects of Indian history and yet entertain. Before you wonder whatever or whoever is this Sammy – Sammy is the word that broke an empire.

(Sharma, Partap. *Sammy! The Word That Broke an Empire*. Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. Mumbai, 2005. Blurb. All the subsequent references to the play in the Research paper are to this edition only and are indicated by page numbers in the parentheses).

The play begins first with the shadow of the Mahatma and then with another shadow who will play the roles of other characters in the ensemble. The playwright uses a new technique - the innovative / modernized device of soliloquy. Soliloquy was used to enable the character to express what was going on in his mind after or before a particular situation. Here the real physical form of the character is in conversation with his other inner super self that advises or guides or gives suggestions to the physical character in an artificial situation, and thereby helps in raising his character and personality to a higher level of consciousness.

Mohan's journey to Mahatma begins with an incident (he was asked to remove his headdress by the British Magistrate) that shocks him and awakens him to the significance of human dignity, and ultimately inspires him to begin his struggle against this racial prejudice. Here begins the process of evolution of an ordinary lawyer into the great Mahatma. Dada Abdulla, Mohan's first client in South Africa, tells him that the English magistrate considers all Indian labourers beasts of burden and coolies. When Mohan decides not to provoke unnecessary insults, and starts wearing a hat instead, Abdulla warns him not to do so because the hat would make him look like an Indian Christian waiter. When Mohan tells him that in his opinion there is no harm in being mistaken for a Christian waiter, Abdulla tells him that all African Christians behave with Indian Christians abominably, "I tell you, Jesus would have a hard time in South Africa, with his coloured skin and desert robes" (9) and this knowledge about prejudice against all Indians, irrespective of their religion, makes Mohan determine to go on the path of struggle. Here is what Mohan thinks and tells Abdulla about his decision, "The way prejudice begets prejudice! We must reclaim the Indian Christians as our own. They're educated. We must stand together in the struggle" (9).

What is significant is that the playwright also draws our attention to some of the great qualities of Mohan's character and personality at this initial stage itself. He has a great quality of tolerance. When he comes to know about the Magistrate's prejudice against his headdress, in place of picking up a quarrel with him, he decides to wear a hat instead. Another quality is his foresight. He believes that the Britishers strongly believe in the principle of equality, and therefore he thinks that Indians will gain their sympathy, "I believe there's a great deal of good in the British and we can learn by this example" (10). Another great quality of Mohan is his dispassionate thinking. He himself examines his ideas critically before following them. These qualities show that Mohan's heart and mind provide the soil where the seeds of revolt, created by the shock caused by the insult to his dignity by the magistrate, can easily germinate and sprout in time.

When Mohan is thrown out of the first-class compartment despite having a first-class ticket, the playwright shows Mohan's three books (the *Koran*, *Unto This Last* and the *Bible*) left on his birth. It shows the confusion of Mohan in his initial years of life. He was searching for God here and there and the incidents / the practical experiences of life teach him that human dignity is higher than God. God is nothing but truth, and truth is nothing but the human dignity for which he will have to struggle. Mahatma asks Mohan to think about the life of Mahavir or Buddha. Like them, Mohan must devote his energies to the search for the meaning of existence. Mohan realizes that Mahatma wants him to search for the answers to the questions such as - Why man comes into this world? Why he takes birth again and again? Mahatma advises him not to compare himself with Christ so he does not need to be crucified in the process to secure human dignity. Jesus was more a man of contemplation than a man of action. Mohan decides to be a man of action as per the need of the hour. Contemplation with action whenever needed, is the key to success in the case of Mahatma. The railway

compartment incident provokes and convinces him to act for human dignity. To quote the aftermath of thoughts in the words of Mr. Abdul Kalam:

I visualized the feelings and thoughts that would have gone through Gandhiji's mind on that fateful day. He was in the Pietermaritzburg railway station from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. During this time the multiple thoughts were racing through his mind. Between 9 p.m. and 12 p.m. one of the thoughts taking shape was 'I must punish the oppressors. Then, between 12 a.m and 3 a.m. a second wave of thoughts came to him, which directed him 'I should leave South Africa and the practice of law and go back home to India and lead a happy life'. Between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m., a third wave of thought emerged, thoughts that led to a great decision: 'What can I give to Africa to help remove apartheid using the lessons of Pietermaritzberg?' That's how on 7 June 1893, the seeds of the *Satyagraha* movement were planted, which finally led India to realize its freedom. (Singh 4)

Such was his mental process, or one may say he struggled with his own thoughts before finalizing any decision, and that was the only secret of his success and his emergence as Mahatma Gandhi.

When Mohan informs Abdulla about the case being resolved out of the court without spending any money, it shows his convincing power. The man who struggled to utter even a single word in the court, settles the whole matter amicably with the help of his adroit communicative power and ability. Abdulla regards Mohan as "most unlike a lawyer" (18) as "lawyers like to prolong cases so that they can collect more fees" (18). At this he defines the actual job of a lawyer i.e. "to breach a rift and not to further it" (18). Abdulla in a light-hearted manner retorts that, in order to avoid a speech in the court, Mohan has settled the matter out of the court. But Abdulla forgets that it is because of Mohan's prudence only. He not only saved time, money and energy by doing so but also brought peace and amiability into the life of Abdulla, his cousin and his own self. He says, "Why fight in court when you can agree as friends?" (18). Mohan also reminds him that he has already delivered a speech in Pretoria and that was a great success. The playwright has not discussed this speech in detail but for the importance of understanding the development of his communicative ability, one must know that during his stay in Pretoria, within a week of his arrival there, he delivered a public speech and the theme was truthfulness in business. This speech was such a grand success that it created an awareness of the oppression among the suffering Indians. He also took up the issue of Indian residents travelling in the first-class railway compartment. As a result of this speech, Indian residents got an official assurance that they would be allowed to travel in the first and second-class compartments if only they were properly dressed. His victory was partial but it shows his capability and expertise in effective communication. Had he gone through the legal proceedings; he would not have achieved this much so soon. So, the power of unity, struggle and effective communication led him on the path of progress. The dramatist shows the contrast of the two incidents – his success in Abdulla's case where he had to convince only one man with his logic and ideology, and his success in the railway compartment case where he convinced a large gathering.

Another great quality of Mohan, the playwright presents is his eagerness to learn from anybody, friend or foe. He cites the example of the white people while delivering a speech in Pretoria, "they are very civic minded" (19). To make them understand their points, he advises Indians to form an association which may protest them effectively. This shows his strong faith in unity. He infuses the sense of dignity in every Indian – Hindu or Muslim. Even Abdulla now feels a change in himself. Whenever he comes across the negative comments about Indians in the newspaper, he admits, "I used to clip out these items and send them to friends in India as a joke. But now ... I only send the market rates. How can they imagine the way we are treated here" (20).

Mohan knows how to use British laws for the benefit of Indians. He remarks that “the British law guarantees equal treatment” and they must see that “the law is not perverted” (20). When there is a conflict between the law of the land and the law of the conscience, one must follow the law of the conscience. Mohan believes in equality in all aspects of life. He asks Abdulla to have the signatures of all, irrespective of gender, religion or status, for Natal Indian Congress. At that time there were around one lakh Indians living in South Africa, chiefly in Natal. He also brings his own family to South Africa as he knows that for a successful leader it is essential to involve his whole self including his family. If there is a need for women to be involved, his own wife must be involved first. He discards Abdulla’s opinion of not introducing labourers in the movement as they are only slaves without spirits. Mohan tells him that all have spirits. He directs Abdulla:

People always have spirit. It may simply hide somewhere waiting for a just cause and the right moment. We’ll start a petition right away. And don’t overlook the Christians. . . . sign them on. Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Parsees, agnostics, atheists, blacks, browns, the whole lot. And any white person who may wish to join. (22)

He is open-minded and by inviting the whites on their own terms, he ensures that his demands automatically reach the queen, and by singing “God save the Queen” (22) at the end of the meeting, he expresses his love and respect to the Queen. Thus, their demands (negative points for the Queen) as well as the love and respect for the Queen (positive points) help them in obtaining their desired result.

Partap Sharma takes up another important incident to show Gandhi’s greatness. When Mohan comes back to South Africa with his family, some Europeans assault him by slapping and abusing. Mrs. Alexander, the police superintendent’s wife, saves him from further assaults. He fails to understand why people want him to go back to India when he is helping them out. He realizes that the people have become so much accustomed to the benefits of slavery - system that they cannot welcome a person who wants to rid them of their servile ways of living:

MAHATMA. (*Slowly, deliberately*) Prejudice is a many limbed, blindfolded tyrant who mocks and underestimates others and cannot see that the joke is on him. (Walks among the frozen crowd) These are all the slaves of prejudice. These are many limbs of a false god. This is the violent army of the tyrant, Prejudice. They are oppressed slaves. (25)

The crowd is violent to Mohan just because they fear that he will destroy the “vicious god enshrined in their minds” (25). God, Mohan, asserts, is just a notion which is always in the process of evolution. God is good when the good things happen, and God is evil when the bad things happen. God is nothing but a thought in the mind. And here, Mohan does not fight for God but for the truth - life’s truth. Truth also changes according to situations and circumstances. Mohan learns that there is no need to have arms and ammunition to fight with the blindfold tyrants / thoughts. He just needs to change the thought process of the oppressed people. So, the enemy is nothing but vicious thoughts disguised as men, and to change them Mohan just needs will/spirit and powerful skills of communication to be used as weapon. It seems a little difficult for Mohan to identify spirit with God and life with action. It is apparent that Buddha’s theory is not easy for a common man like him. He thinks about the meaning of the word ‘Sammy’ and uses it as the distorted form of Swami, a teacher. He thanks the people who dishonoured him and decides to be a great teacher and come up to the expectation of the pupils - people who assaulted him. Aenoch Aasvogel, a British representative, realizes that Mohan cannot be held back by law, he himself proposes the change in law to arrest him.

The playwright then directs the audience towards Gandhi’s personal life. When he thinks of an action, he applies it in his own personal life. He strongly believes that he cannot guide and

control others with two different principles. The realization dawns upon him that example is always more effective than precepts. He teaches his wife Kasturba to learn the law of equality and feel the pulse of equality. For this, he makes Kasturba clean the chamber pot which she does, though unwillingly. The playwright points out some negative qualities in Mohan that we must unlearn. In order to fulfill his wish, he expects Kasturba to always wear a smile upon her lips. Sometimes he becomes violent and that results in her bursting out into tears. She yearns for good schooling for her children but Mohan wants to teach them himself and that too only when they accompany him every morning for a five-mile walk.

Mohan neither accepts gifts from anybody, nor does he allow his family to accept any. Kasturba objects, "You don't have any real love for us. You even returned the presents we were given" (30). Mohan feels that real love has nothing to do with such things. He frankly tells his wife, "Those presents were more than tokens. Gold watches and diamond jewellery and ... and ... they were given for my public work, not the family's. Why should you complain if we don't keep them? It's wrong to take gifts for public work" (30). Kasturba rightly complains that her eldest son was deprived of the scholarship just because of him. He tries to justify himself by arguing that he cleared himself of the charge of nepotism. While judging the applicants, he could not choose his own son over others. Why didn't he keep himself away from the committee when he came to know that his own son was an applicant. This may show that he was very honest but it also shows that he was a very irresponsible father. Which father would destroy the entire career of his son so much that the son would turn a wreck for the whole of his life? Gandhi always had an option of opting out of the selection committee but he never availed himself of it. Honest public life does not allow such irresponsible behaviour on the part of the father. It was Gandhi's false sense of honesty that prompted him to be so cruel to his son, and the audience felt so horrified to see Gandhi asking Kasturba to leave his house. They all praise Kasturba who does not relent and yield to his unjust order.

Mohan thinks that the involvement of the Indians in the Zulu uprising is necessary to show their trust in the British Empire and to justify their claims for full citizenship. He ponders over the right action and goes to help the injured soldiers in the Zulu rebellion. He actively encourages the recruitment of Indians for the uprising. The British Empire, however, allows Indians just to serve the wounded British soldiers. In the Zulu rebellion, every tenth man was killed. It forces Mohan to think about life and violence. While he is busy in serving the wounded soldiers, Polak, a young Englishman, meets him for briefing about his family's shift at the Phoenix settlement as per his order. Mohan tells Polak that only one's own thoughts disturb one the most rather than others', when Polak says, "I hope I'm not disturbing you" (35). Gandhi thinks about the reason of violence and concludes that it is our intense driving or overmastering feelings that cloud one's vision and lead to violence. One must overcome such passions and he begins with himself. He is aware of his own violence at home. He recognizes his passion for sex which he must overcome for his overall personality change. Mohan expresses his desire to take a vow of celibacy. He gives a new definition to celibacy - living with the wife but not having any sexual relations with her. He frankly admits, "Lust or concern could have made me rush back to my wife, abandoning the sick and wounded" (36). It is only one's passions which prevent one from concentrating on one's work. He is only around of thirty - three year old when he decides to be a celibate, and be on the path of self-realization. At this young age, he learns that, "The more self-restraint he exercises, the closer he moves to self-realization" (37). His regard for his wife is obvious when he says to Polak that the decision of celibacy cannot be unilateral. He must consult his other half.

Another important incident that engages Mohan is the registration of Indian workers. General Smuts faced resistance from the Indian population led by Gandhi in South Africa. Gandhi with the Indian community was opposing compulsory registration announced by Asiatic Law Amendment ordinance of 1906. Gandhi and other Indians of African Community were sent to prison but Gandhi did not stop writing to Smuts. With his communicative power skills Gandhi

won over Smuts to meet him in prison and agree to the voluntary registration. This is known as Gandhi - Smuts Compromise in Indian history.

Gandhi had a great friendship with Hermann Kallenbach who sent him books by Tolstoy and Thoreau through Polak. These books have a great influence upon him. Dr. Gunjan Chaturvedi has discussed the impact of these books in her research paper *Quintessence of Gandhian Ideology and its Perennial Relevance*:

No one, thus, can gainsay the significance of Ruskin, Tolstoy and Thoreau in the life of Gandhi but at the same time, one would have to point out the fact that all these three writers suffered from a terrible shortcoming, that is their desire for action was not commensurate with the intensity of thoughts. (Chaturvedi 7)

She points out why these authors could not get as much success as Gandhi. These three authors expressed their thoughts but could not put them into action. Gandhi was the man who put not only his own thoughts in action but also the thoughts of these three writers'. Mohan's inner self asks him to learn even from the title of the book *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. And he did look into his soul for God and felt that. We all are governed by the God within. In the light of the current scenario, Mohan says that he finds shock and horror within. Here he tries to peep into the minds of Indians and tries to know how they feel after they are asked to carry their work permits. He himself cannot go to the court without his own work permit. The British Empire has already learnt about Mohan's techniques and now it is framing laws that Indians cannot challenge. The British government makes a law even to arrest Gandhi if he refuses to register himself.

It is Kasturba who adds to Mohan's problem when he ponders over the plan of making General Smuts understand his point of view. Kasturba requests him not to disobey law and not to instigate others to do so because it will affect their livelihood. Mohan and Mahatma are again shown in conflict at this point. Mahatma affirms his faith in God, Mohan does not agree with him. Mahatma has a strong belief that God will feed all in case of loss of jobs while Mohan fails to believe in what Mahatma says. He thinks seriously about Kasturba's stand, and decides to give a trial to Mahatma's faith in God by giving up his own job. Mahatma praises him for doing so. If he refuses to register, he will not be able to feed his family and so is the case with others, and if Mohan wants to force others to do the same, it will be his duty to feed his followers. Kasturba bluntly says, "Don't look so surprised. It's obvious. If you rouse them, you have to lead them; and if you lead them, you have to feed them" (43). His inner self thinks of what great prophets say about God and man. The *Sermon on the Mount* says, "Care not for the morrow" . . . "Behold the lilies of the field, they care not for the morrow, they toil not yet they grow" (44). The *Gita* says, "Do your duty without thought of reward. Not for the fruits –" (45). Mohan does all the experiments on himself before applying them on others so he himself leaves the job and decides to let God provide food for his family. In this way he tries to test the sayings of Jesus, Buddha and Mahavir.

Mohan thinks of the idea of non - violence. He wishes to offer his other cheek to be slapped until the enemy feels ashamed of it and stops his tyranny. This was praiseworthy and Mahatma says, "No one before this has attempted to use individual moral force as a vehicle of group action. You are trying to turn personal ethics into political possibilities. You are forging a new weapon. You can change politics forever" (44). Thus *Satyagraha*, as Mohan defines, is – "not to seek to demolish and destroy the opponent but to win him- *the enemy* (italics mine) over completely" (56).. Mohan refuses to register himself. Aasvogel and General Smuts speak to the public and disclose that the government has issued orders to arrest all the Indians including Mohan who defy law. Mohan asks people to burn their permits and appeals not to worry about being in jail. Indians flood into jail following Mohan's call. In jail, he has to undergo hard labour. It is his patience that baffles the British. He picks out the good in the worst circumstances. He

likes the prison uniform, likes the cap especially, praises the dinner rules – having the last meal before nightfall. He encourages people to sleep on the hard bed and asks them not to use mattresses provided by the jail authorities. He also asks the fellow prisoners to wear the cap “like a badge of courage even when they leave the jail” (47). These are the tricks which make General Smuts worried. Mohan achieves his aims because of his patience and mass - following. The British have to release all of them because the government finds that the worst punishment given to Mohan has proven fruitless because of Gandhi’s extraordinary patience and endurance.

The playwright takes up another incident. Mohan informs Kasturba that the government was unsuccessful in his earlier attempt so it is now trying to make a fresh attempt to wound their dignity. When the government thinks of invalidating Indian marriages, and to impose laws such as - poll tax on Asiatics and thereby ban their free movement by prohibiting entry into Transvaal, Mahatma appears and asks Mohan to bring women forward in the protest. “Injustice is best fought by those most affected by it” (48). It is not easy to understand this point as the most affected ones were women and children, and he could not bring them to lead the protest. Till then nobody had even thought about it. Mohan’s inner self convinces him to take this daring step. As he always begins with himself, he asks Kasturba to lead the protest. He assures Kasturba that women will lead and for their security men would be following them, “We shall march slowly and peacefully from Natal into Transvaal without permits. Though we shall be about two thousand marchers” (50). His strategy is so successful that, despite arresting Gandhi thrice in just four days, the British government is unable to stop the march of the women and children.

Partap Sharma shows the great influence of Gandhiji even on the Europeans. The government gets alarmed by the peace principle of Gandhi. Smuts is so disturbed that he discusses it with Aasvogel. When Aasvogel tells him that it is his inner - voice that leads him, Smuts says, “How can I get a hold on that?” Aasvogel replies, “Maybe you should get yourself an inner - voice too. He seems to come up with a lot of strategies and tactics. It certainly isn’t just his conscience he consults” (50). He says that all have inner - voice but it is his sincere, devotional heed to it which makes Mohan unique. He thinks rationally and then comes up with his naïve strategies.

Mohan infuses so much courage of leadership in followers- both men and women that they become their own leaders. They keep on marching fearlessly thinking about the calamities that may fall on their families, “One young woman lost her baby in a flooded river which they forded and she kept on walking carrying her grief instead of her child. Another’s son died. She had him cremated and continued on the march” (51). Here ends Mohan’s journey in South Africa. Before bringing Mohan to India, the playwright takes up the incident of the boycott of Simon Commission by the Indians. Since there was no Indian in the Commission, Smuts proposes to send Lord Hardinge’s man – Sir Benjamin Robertson -- to persuade Indians. His ADC confirms the impossibility of persuading Mohan and talks about Mohan’s ability to politely disagree even with his own mentor Ghokhle. Gandhi does not care even for his health in the process of his struggle, and Smuts is surprised at Gandhi’s determination.

Mohan believes in openness and that is why before meeting Smuts, he sends him a copy of the long cable sent by him to his mentor. The playwright devises a tricky incident to show Mohan’s influence on Smuts. When ADC shows Smuts the cable, he does not let him have even a hint that Mohan is waiting outside for him. It also indicates that Gandhi has so much influence on others that they naturally fall for his love and become his followers. When ADC tells him that Mohan is waiting outside and the cable is given to him by Mohan only, Smuts stares at him and surmises that he himself would not be able to escape from Mohan’s influence. So, he feels uncomfortable before meeting Mohan. When Gandhi meets Smuts, he is bald and dressed like a Hindu labourer to show solidarity with the sufferings of the labourers. During the conversation, Smuts shows his inability to deal with such a peaceful man. When Smuts remarks about Mohan’s hair, Mohan very politely says that, “he was always prone to baldness” (53). He wants Smuts

to notice it himself, and he succeeds. Smuts says, "But, no, no, you've shaved your head. Like one of those Hindoo Labourers. And you're dressed like one of them" (53). Smuts admits that he is more injured by his peacefulness. Mohan tells him about the power of peacefulness to him, "If the lion, on seeing a Great Hunter approach, lay down on his back and put his paws in the air, the hunter would find nothing great in killing the playful and friendly lion. Great hunters would give up lion hunting if the lion took to non-resistance" (54).

At last, Smuts, who was totally against submitting to Mohan's will, readily accepts all his demands. Mohan corrects ADC when he congratulates Smuts and Mohan and uses the word 'abject' for the deal. Mohan corrects him and says that it is 'absolute' not 'abject'. When Mohan tells Smuts that he is leaving for India, Smuts remarks, "I can't say that won't be a relief for us" (56). It is clear to Smuts now that Mohan has infused so much of leadership in Indians that they will struggle for their right even without Mohan; and moreover, they are so much aware of their rights that it will not be easy now to suppress their voice. Smuts dreads Mohan's controlling force, and remarks, "I dread to think of the fate of any politician or administrator who might dare to oppose you" (56). Smuts also realizes his power of peace, "But you have inflicted the deeper injury on me by your peacefulness (54)". At this remark, Gandhiji slyly remarks, "Ah. You are beginning to see that?" (54). The conversation between the two is interesting and noteworthy:

SMUTS. The problem is that you are a man of peace. Had you been otherwise, I would have dealt with you... Otherwise. But how can I go on harassing a peaceful man.

MOHAN. (Sympathetically) How can you kill the voluntarily dead?

SMUTS. There's no joy in fighting a walking corpse!

MOHAN. (Understandingly) There is no pleasure in hanging someone who welcomes death.

SMUTS. My soldiers want to see some reaction, some resistance from your lot. (54)

Smuts gets up and walks up and down briskly. Then he stops and agrees at last:

SMUTS. Mr Gandhi, there is no joy for me in this hunt.

MOHAN. You concede all our demands?

SMUTS. I do. Because I see they are just. (55)

Is it not surprising how Mohan uses his weapon of peace and non-violence and makes Smuts surrender? At the end of the meeting, Mohan presents a pair of sandals to Smuts – the sandals made by Gandhi in the prison. Smuts feels overjoyed and surprised and finds himself too overpowered to wear those gifted sandals made by such a great man. After finishing his task, Mohan returns to India via England where he has a meeting with his mentor Ghokhle.

The dramatist describes another incident of Gandhiji's life - his first meeting with Sarojini Naidu. Even Sarojini Naidu could not remain unimpressed by his personality and aura. He makes the poetess join his *Satyagraha*. He calls her "A veritable garuda" (63) and suggests that she "can help fly India to freedom." (63) The credit of this meeting goes to Ghokhle. Sarojini was in London at that time, and Gokhle happened to be in Paris for his treatment. That leads Mohan to stay in London and Sarojini gets a chance to meet him. Their meeting took place on the eve of the great European War of 1914. Regarding her first meeting with Gandhiji, Sarojini Naidu observes:

He lifted his eyes and laughed back at me saying: 'Ah, you must be Mrs. Naidu! Who else dares be so irreverent? 'Come in, 'he said, 'and share my meal'. 'No thanks. I replied, sniffing, 'what an abominable mess it is'. "In this way and at that instant

commenced our friendship, which flowered into real comradeship, and bore fruit in a long, loyal discipleship. ("Sarojini Naidu on a 30-year ")

As Smt. Padmini Sen Gupta in her biography of Sarojini Naidu has written, "This first meeting in London was a red-letter day, an event which changed the whole course of Sarojini Naidu's life, which took her away from the honeyed drawing rooms of scholars and poets and placed her before a beggar-saint. From then on, with his magnetism, he claimed almost all of her whole attention" (Reddy). When Gandhi and Sarojini meet for the first time, Naidu is surprised to see him having his typical lunch (squashed tomatoes, ground nuts and dried bananas mixed in olive oil) just sitting on his prison blanket and using a wooden spoon and bowl. What she calls poverty, Mohan calls a sense of non-possession. Sarojini Naidu remarks:

Mr. Gandhi, You seem simple but I suspect you are a very clever man. In addition to that, I'm sure that you are a very great man. . . . Nevertheless, I shall join you in whatever public service tasks you may wish to share with me including the awful prospect of downing some of that frugal, ascetic uninspiring stuff. (62)

When Sarojini raises her suspicion whether Gandhiji would be able to succeed in his aim in India as he succeeded in South Africa, Mohan clarifies the strength of *Satyagraha*, "The soul force of *Satyagraha* is the strongest, greatest weapon that the world has ever known" (63). It was the time of the First World War and Mohan neither uses the opportunity given by others nor is he eager to earn fame. So, when Sarojini Naidu invites him to a grand public meeting to honour him by garlanding him and providing him an opportunity to declare his aim of India's complete freedom on a foreign soil, he rejects the offer by saying that he must not create problems for the British government right now. He rather thinks that Indians must help the British rulers, "Those who live here and enjoy the benefits of this system must volunteer to serve in the armed forces" (64). His remark makes Naidu speechless; she says, "I've never been struck speechless before" (64). Sarojini Naidu never forgot her first meeting with Gandhi and referred to it again and again. On October 2, 1947, the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 78th birthday, the last Gandhi-Jayanti during his life-time, she recalled this dramatic unplanned first meeting in London and added, "And so, laughingly, we began a friendship that has lasted, grown, developed through all these many years" (Reddy). Mohan also knew the power of this woman. In the very first meeting, he recognized her ability and when Sarojini Naidu remarked on his capacity to mould heroes out of common clay, he humourously rejoined that he can also mould heroines because they perform better than men under stress. She said to Jawahar Lal Nehru, "So we admit it was Sammy who gave us confidence to be ourselves, our beautiful selves" (106). Sarojini compares Dandi March with the walk of Neapolean from Elba, and Jawahar Lal Nehru compares it with Moses leading the Israelites out of bondage. Mohan becomes such an influential person that Sarojini Naidu says: "Oh, he'll change you. Whether you agree with him or not. I'm told that young English officers newly arrived in India are warned, "Stay away from Gandhi or he'll get you!" (79). Mohan shifts his focus to the dominion status of India. He is so well informed that even before he reads the telegram brought by Sarojini, he knows the contents of the telegram, "In Amritsar, Sir Michael O'Dyer, governor of the Punjab, allowed the police to fire on a peaceful procession. The crowd went berserk. Carrying its dead, it went on the rampage. It attacked two banks and the railway station. It killed five Europeans and beat up a lady named Miss Sherwood" (81).

When Mohan is ready to post a letter to Lord Crewe for the involvement of Indians in the war to help the British as he did in South Africa, His inner self severely criticizes him. Mahatma orders him not to post the letter. His inner self calls him egoist, masochist, hungry for name, anarchist who rebels against his own conscience. He feels tortured and readily asks for more pain because the more pain he feels, the purer he gets. Mohan gets confused and ponders over his own faults and thinks about the power of the conscience, "Is conscience a social phenomenon? Or is it innate in man, a gift of nature, a genetic configuration, an insistence of the spirit, the voice of the Truth, a reflection of God?" (67). At this Mahatma encourages him to think like this and soon he will be in no need to be with Mahatma, his inner self, as both will be

one and he will be a perfect man. Soon Mohan feels compelled and confesses: “Yes! And I admit that I am hoping to improve my status and that of my people through the British empire” (68). Mohan rebels against his own conscience, “Go on. Make me hate myself. Rob me of my confidence. Didn’t the poet say, “thus conscience doth make cowards of us all”? I am what I am and must face that” (69). Mahatma counts his weaknesses one by one i.e. his lust, his unfulfilled desire of becoming a doctor and Mohan admits all. Mohan is now prepared to confess all his failings to the whole world.

Here the playwright hints that it was his decision to confess his own failings that led him to pen his autobiography. He also tells the audience that Mohan has converted all his negative qualities into positive ones. His unfulfilled desire to become a doctor led him to serve the wounded British soldiers in the Zulu rebellion. Mahatma confesses that he stole money for cigarettes and Mohan turned this bad thought into the principle of non-possession. He transformed his lust into celibacy. Thus, he gives a message to mankind that one can do what he wants if one is determined, “A man can help by doing what he always wanted to do” (71).

In the second act, Sharma focuses on Gandhiji’s political journey in India, and his further evolution from Mohan to Mahatma. Mohan has gained so much fame that the people of India have great faith in him. In Champaran (Bihar), the poor peasants are forced to grow Indigo plants on their land. A poor peasant Rajkumar Shukla comes from there to meet Gandhi and requests him to help the poor peasants there. Gandhi first refuses to go there but when Shukla follows him from place to place, he agrees to go with him - “How can I mind when you are so persistent and have so much faith in my ability to help you?” (76). The next incident described in the play is that of Sarojini Naidu’s coming to meet Motilal Nehru and chancing to meet Jawahar Lal Nehru for the first time. He tells her about his surprise at Gandhiji’s amazing success, “Amazing. Absolutely amazing. He’s sweeping through the countryside like a forest fire” (76). Nehru calls Gandhi a phenomenon, and shows his eagerness to know more about him. When he asks Sarojini Naidu whether he should agree or argue with him, she warns him about Gandhiji’s capacity to change people and tells him about her own experience, “I used to get up lazily by eight and eat by nine but Gandhiji has changed all that. One snide remark from him and I’m a different creature. That’s his forte, changing people” (77). After knowing all this, Jawahar Lal Nehru feels it is better to only watch him out. Sarojini tells him further that Indian peasants call him Babu, the father of the peasants and Rabindra Nath Tagore has hailed him as Mahatma.

Another important incident, the dramatist takes up is the passing of Rowlett Act. Mohan was worried that he was not able to convince the British for the dominion status of India. India had even sacrificed his able-bodied sons in the defense of the empire in expectation of the dominion status. But in return, Indians got the Rowlett Act that gave power to the government to try them without jury, and as he suspected, they would be jailed indefinitely without trial. The Act made him so perturbed that he lost his sleep during nights and deeply thought about the strategy to be adopted to deal with the British Government. He explores into his inner self and decides to go for a nationwide *Satyagraha*. Mohan finally succeeds in his *Satyagraha* and feels relaxed. In the meanwhile, Sarojini Naidu goes furious when she comes to know about the massacre of the innocent crowd in Amritsar by the forces of General Michael O’ Dyer. She fears that the peaceful crowd of innocent people would retaliate and Gandhi would support them. But Gandhiji asks her to remain calm and continue with the principle of non-violence- “Revenge is bad. ‘An eye for an eye’ will only leave the whole world blind We must first curb our own urge to violence and turn it into love, real love, for the opponent” (82).

He communicates the percept not only with his words but also with his silence. When he feels that he can not stop the riots that break out after the horrid event at Jalianwala Bagh. he suspends his *Satyagraha* and announces three days fast. He knows very well that the news of his fast would spread rapidly all over India and would stop people from indulging in violence, and this was the only solution that would work faster than his address, “I am suspending *Satyagraha*

immediately and undertaking a fast for three days as a penance for my mistake. Go and inform the others that the movement is suspended indefinitely till we have learnt to improve ourselves” (85). This statement gives people a shock and the peace is restored. He quotes the advice of Shelley which he delivers through his poem titled *The Mask of Anarchy* composed on the event of the Peterloo Massacre:

With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.

Then they will return with shame
To the place from which they came,
And the blood thus shed will speak
In hot blushes on their cheek. (Shelley)

Sarojini Naidu asks Mohan to give a clarion call for some action, “I have made a Himalayan blunder in thinking that the people could practice civil disobedience without proper guidance in non-violence” (85). Mohan calls the act of General O’Dyer barbaric, rather satanic. Nehru praises him for his communicative skills. For Gandhi, ethics is an essential part of politics and government. He does not allow anyone to be violent as he considers this to be a “vicious cycle that only creates fundamentalists and fanatics” (87). When Jawahar Lal Nehru criticizes him for using non-violent ways just because India did not have sufficient arms, Mohan refutes him emphatically and says that even if he had weapons, he would never think of being violent as he strongly believes - “A fully-armed man is very likely to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice. But non-violence is unadulterated fearlessness” (87). Mohan remarks, “Behind the guns of imperialism and colonialism is the system The real freedom struggle is to be free of materialism” (88). Mohan develops such a charismatic personality that none remains uninfluenced by him, not even Jawahar Lal Nehru. Mohan asks Jawahar Lal Nehru why he follows him when he finds his views unreal, Jawahar Lal Nehru frankly admits “your idealism moves me and I see it means no harm to anyone and I haven't the heart to disillusion you. And there seems to be nothing better on the horizon” (88). Mohan says that Jawahar too is a true Satyagrahi as he is speaking the truth as that is the first and foremost quality for a Satyagrahi. The second being non-violence and Jawahar Lal Nehru is impressed by both.

Gandhi’s story is incomplete without the spinning wheel. Kasturba introduces the spinning wheel to Mohan who feels overjoyed and calls it “the peasant woman’s friend. The farmer’s secondary occupation. The poor man’s source of income” (91). He relates spinning wheel with the salvation of India as it will make Indians self-reliant and self-sufficient. Indians would not depend on the Britishers for clothes. Speaking about the utility of the spinning wheel Gandhi says that only it can free Indians economically and if the whole country follows Non-cooperation movement, Indians can get rid of the British within a year. Mohan impresses Jawahar Lal Nehru by his new concepts and Sarojini by his use of new words. Mohan uses new vocabulary- *Satyagraha*, Non - cooperation - because his actions are new. Naidu remarks, “First, it was passive resistance in South Africa that became *Satyagraha*. Then we had an all India *hartal* (strike) and non-cooperation” (93). It was because of his communicative magic that Gandhi was able to lead the masses. Even Jinnah, his opponent feels envious of his expressive power. When Gandhi takes over Khilafat Movement, he influences all persons of all religions. Jinnah says, “Gandhi, in order to get a hold of the emotions of the Muslims has taken up the Khilafat Movement as his own. . . . Gandhi is helping to internationalize Indian Muslims. . . . Badly he frightens me. I have never been staunch or religious. But the more of a Mahatma he becomes, the more of a Muslim I must be” (96). Mohan does not believe in the give and take policy. When some people argued that he should support the Muslims in Khilafat movement

only when they promise to give up the killing of cows, Mohan candidly says that he- “was supporting the Muslims because he believed in their cause not because he wanted to barter his support.” (101)

In the struggle for India’s freedom, Mohan jolts the Viceroy by his peacefulness. The Viceroy Lord Irwin remarks, “Old Gandhi’s really got guts, swinging the cat by its tail under their very noses” (97). After the Chauri Chaura incident, the Viceroy and Clancy discuss and find themselves helpless in defusing Gandhi’s influence over the masses. The Viceroy remarks that none can blackmail Gandhi. He is the man who turns dirt into diamonds. None can pressurize him except his conscience. Clancy too cannot resist his influence. He elaborates:

I must tell you, Milord, that sometimes my men have been in a terrible jam, what with the crowd being protective of Mahatma. And it’s Gandhi who saves them. He says, “Release the poor fellow. He’s only a plain clothes policeman snooping on me. He’s the detective from the C.I. D. Let him do his job. I have nothing to hide.” (100)

It is Mohan’s foresightedness and far - sightedness that make the Britishers so cautious of him. When the Viceroy comes to know that Mohan is organizing all party convention, he remarks, “They’ve adopted the Report of the Moti Lal Nehru Committee as a blueprint for India’s constitution. It says all adults will have the right to vote. And, mind you, that includes women. We didn’t have it in Britain and they’re demanding it here” (102). In an ante-chamber in the Viceregal Palace, John Clancy presents the list of names – Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru, Jinnah, Sapru, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Patel, Subhas Bose, Srinivas Iyenger, Fazli Hussain, Ambedkar - all connected with *Satyagraha* or the other movements. John Clancy and the Viceroy decide to defeat their plan by defaming them along with Gandhi. When the enemy fails on the professional front, he digs out the personal life of the opponent. So, the Viceroy asks Clancy about Mohan’s personal life - his eldest son has become a Muslim, has defrauded some persons who trusted him, has set up a company in Calcutta and then has run away with the money his partners had given him. The Viceroy thinks to demolish Mohan’s public image by attacking his personal life. But he soon realizes that Mohan is playing very well on his personal front too. When Harilal starts drinking and visiting prostitutes, Mohan assures people that Harilal will mend his ways. Similarly, when people approach Mohan to complain about his son, Mohan publishes their complaint in his newspaper and warns people against the folly of thinking that a son must be like his father. Moreover, Mohan favours the Hindu - Muslim unity not only in his public life but also at his home. When Harilal adopts Muslim religion, Gandhi neither criticizes him nor becomes angry. He asks Harilal to be a good Muslim. Thus, the Britishers’ plan to succeed by defaming Mohan fails, just because his personal life is also very clean and open to all.

To create dissent among the leaders, Clancy suggests the remedy by putting them all against each other. Clancy suggests two names – Fazli and Ambedkar to the Viceroy and suggests that Simon should invite these two persons separately to the All-India Convention. And he also proposes that the Britishers may use Jinnah and Ambedkar to oppose Mohan. But the Viceroy knows that it is not easy to cause any rift because Mohan has called the All India Convention in order to forge unity and national identity; he has planned for the constitutional draft. Yet Clancy asks him to follow the policy of ‘divide and rule’. Mohan realizes that the principle of non-violence cannot help him in every situation. The Mahatma in Mohan makes him realize that he is far away from his goal and old age is approaching him. Innumerable thoughts emerge in Mohan’s mind. Ultimately, he thinks that the masses can be moved to action by making them feel the lack of essential necessities of life without which they cannot live at all. Mahatma in him points out that salt is not free and is still under the control of the Government who tax it. Mohan decides to write a letter to the government to repeal the salt law, and warns them that if the law remains in force, he will start Civil Disobedience – a festival of self-assertion. As the British government does not repeal the law, the movement is started. Sarojini Naidu comes back from South Africa and informs Jawahar Lal Nehru about the movement. She

decides to join the Dandi march. Jawahar Lal Nehru is busy in searching for the formula to manufacture salt as he is convinced that Mohan will win again. As Indians have learnt to weave clothes similarly, they will be self-reliant in manufacturing salt. Sarojini remarks poetically, “we’re all caught in the web of love spun by the mystic spinner” (106).

The playwright shows the impact of Gandhiji on Sarojini and Jawahar Lal Nehru when Sarojini remarks, “I’m impressed at how much he has changed you. I first heard of you in England as Joe. Someone said to me, ‘‘You must meet young Joe Nehru, a terrific chap’’ (106). In return Jawahar Lal Nehru too remarks that Mohan has changed her also. He was once asked to read Sarah Naidu’s poetry who wrote divinely but now he does not find any Sarah in her poetry. Thus, both of them admit that it is only Sammy who has shaped them to be themselves, to be original. The playwright sums up the identity of Sammy that Mohan has travelled far, and has accomplished the journey from being Sammy to being Bapu. Mohan has gained the reputation of being a ‘Father’ now no longer a mere teacher. He is now highly respected by his followers and even Nehru feels offended when Sarojini uses the title ‘Mickey mouse Mahatma’ for Mohan. He requests her not to use such a derogatory epithet.

The British government fails again, and Clancy informs the Viceroy about their inability to stop the people from breaking the salt law due to the involvement of a huge crowd. They fail to stop the march and Clancy informs the Viceroy that now it is not he but Sarojini Naidu who is leading the masses. When Clancy reads out the confidential report of the commissioner, the Viceroy realizes how terribly they are behaving with the poor marchers:

Suddenly at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with their steel-shod Lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. . . . those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes ... (111)

The Viceroy expresses with pity and horror, “My God, Clancy, I can’t believe we’re doing this! . . . It makes me sick to my stomach. . . . Oh. Painful. Very painful. But let it go. Shows the kind of doggedness we are dealing with” (111). When Mohan makes the Viceroy feel the intensity of people’s force, the Viceroy gets perturbed and finally lifts the ban on the Congress Working Committee. He releases Mohan from jail and invites him for a talk. It is Mohan’s silence and his actions which speak louder than his words. When he concludes his meeting with the Viceroy, Mohan asks him:

allow me to toast your health in this excellent lime- juice flavoured with a pinch of salt
...(He takes a little salt from a pouch) ...of my own illegal manufacture. This reminds me at the Boston Tea Party.
He drops the salt in the nimbu-pani, smiles and raises the glass and drinks. The Viceroy’s smile remains frozen. (113)

Finally, there is an agreement between the two that ten thousand prisoners will be released and Jawahar Lal Nehru will be participating in the next Round Table Conference in England. There were three Round Table Conferences and when the Second Round Table Conference failed, the journalists interviewed Mohan. He takes the opportunity to talk to the journalists and answers their questions intelligently to convey his message to the British government. To the question, what message does he want to give, he says that his life is itself a message. When they ask him if he feels disappointed or if he feels that it was a waste of time to attend the conference, he replies, “No. My real conference is with the people of Britain and I am happy to talk to them on the streets as I am pleased to talk to you” (114).

He influences every one – the old and the young and even the children. Children like him so much that they follow him dancing while he walks five miles every morning through the East End in London. They ask him amusing questions like what he eats, whether he may come to their birthday parties and so on. Even George Bernard Shaw calls him a phenomenon, not a man. He makes the journalists burst into spontaneous applause with the presence of his mind and oratorical powers. Very frankly, he tells them, “if I appear today before the British public in my loin cloth, it is because I have come as the sole representative of those half-starved, half-naked and dumb millions” (115). As soon as he returns from England, he restarts the movement. The Viceroy orders to arrest all the leaders– Gandhi, his wife, Sarojini Naidu and others and to put them in jail. There, in prison too, Mohan uses the opportunity to show why he demanded freedom for the people. The playwright shows him spinning the wheel in jail, and other prison inmates following him. Mohan is against the division based on caste and community in the proposed new draft of the constitution which was presented to him in jail. He considers himself a *Baniya* who always wants more and cannot be satisfied by less than what he desires. He addresses his prison mates, “My heart is confident that God will grant me that position when I may speak for the whole of India, and if I have to die striving for that ideal, I shall achieve the peace of my heart” (117). Putting Mohan into jail does not help the British Government. When they become atrocious with the protesters, Gandhi announces his decision to go on a fast unto death which creates havoc in the mind of the British rulers. Now the government finds itself helpless. They fear that if Mohan dies in British custody, the British Government would find it almost impossible to control the situation. So, the government immediately orders to shift his wife and Sarojini Naidu to the same jail with him to make sure that Gandhi does not die on account of his fast.

On the tenth day of his fast, Mohan’s Mahatma (inner self) warns him that he is slipping away from his aim as he is growing old and Indians are still suffering. He cannot wait for long and cannot simply rely on his fast. So, Mohan plays another card and makes an announcement, “If the Hindu mind is not prepared to banish untouchability root and branch, it must sacrifice me without the slightest hesitation” (120). He knows that people love him and they would not compromise with his life. This is the most critical action of his life which opens the doors of temples to all untouchables. Mohan has always been executing new ideas and this time the new idea is to keep ballot boxes outside temples so that the ordinary persons can vote on the issue. Mohan finally succeeds as the count in Bombay alone is twenty-five thousand for and only four forty-five against. Thus, the Harijans are allowed to enter temples, and in Allahabad alone twelve temples are thrown open for Harijans. The Britishers, who wanted to divide India based on caste and community, utterly failed. Gandhi also plans to invite Ambedkar to draft the constitution when India gets freedom. The Viceroy had earlier sent a blunt message to Mohan that the Britishers did not consider him a representative of all the Indians nor did he represent the Muslims nor the outcasts and the untouchables. But the Britishers are knocked down by this action of Mohan. This action made Mohan popular and raised his status so high on the thirteenth day of his fast, he cables the Prime Minister of Britain and demands “compensation for compromises” (121) and the elimination of a separate electorate. He does all this from the prison itself and succeeds in removing the mediator Viceroy. The situation becomes so crucial that the Prime Minister of Britain comes in direct contact with Mohan. The Viceroy feels offended and blurts out, “My God, he’s dictating from jail to the prime minister of Britain It shows that the centre of power in India has shifted” (122). Thus Gandhi possesses such a charismatic personality that all the Indians – from the poorest and the richest, and from the weakest to the strongest follow him with great regard.

One cannot always afford to follow the middle path. Later or sooner, one has to come on one side. This time Mahatma gives Mohan the insight that the middle path is difficult in the case of India's freedom struggle. Mohan realizes that he was standing between the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, the communists and the fascists, the socialists and the capitalists. Mohan gets confused. Then his inner self guides him and asks him to be with the poorest in the

land. He must act for their welfare. Mahatma also says that while doing this, he must put away all his personal life concerns such as Kasturba's ill health or the problems created by his son Harilal. He feels disgusted but his inner self consoles him by imparting him insight that all people have the right to choose their own way of salvation. So, he must not feel upset by Harilal's choice of getting salvation through the Muslim religion. The playwright suggests that after all Mohan too is a human being. He feels offended when he sees Harilal shouting at the railway station- "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jay! Mahatma Gandhi ki Jay!" . . . "Kasturba ki Jay! Victory to Kasturba!" (124). At that time Harilal is drunk and untidy. The son offers a half-eaten orange to Kasturba and forces her to eat it before him just to show her love for him. Out of love for his beguiled son, Mohan tries to take one piece from Kasturba but she closes her fist. The playwright effectively describes Gandhi's emotions:

MOHAN. She ate one bit of it and the rest was still in her hand when the train started. He knows I love oranges. Oranges and dates are my favourite fruits. I reached out to take one piece from Kasturba but saw that she had closed her fist over it. The juice was flowing between fingers as freely as the tears were falling from our eyes. (124)

Mahatma asks Mohan to forgive Kasturba for this. Mohan says that he can forgive all but it is difficult to forgive himself. If he had not rejected Harilal's application for scholarship, his condition would not have become so pathetic. At this crucial emotional moment, Mahatma advises him to control himself and to merge all his personal sorrows into the larger concern i.e. India's freedom. Finally, Mohan recollects himself and announces to go for the Quit India Movement. Nehru, Jinnah and Naidu talk about the movement. This time not a thousand but millions of people, at Gandhiji's one call, come on the streets to protest the presence of British Raj. Jinnah finds it absurd when he comes to know that students have left their schools and colleges, lawyers have left the law courts, and the Quit-India movement has brought the administration to a standstill. The movement keeps growing stronger in spite of its leaders being in jail.

Personal losses must not wreck a person. When Kasturba dies in jail, Mohan is perturbed. He feels as if he could not continue his life without her. The death of Mahadev Desai, his secretary, further adds to his sorrow. Mohan is completely depressed. At this crucial time of Mohan's life, Mahatma comes to his help and consoles him. Mahatma makes him realise that, "Death is as much a part of life as life is of death" (126). Describing Mohan's state of mind at this juncture the playwright observes - "Her (Kasturba's) body is taking a long time to burn. The flames of the funeral pyre are gentle with her" (126). Mahatma asks him to go to his room and rest there rather than watching the burning pyre but he does not pay any heed as he is lost in the memories of Kasturba. He sees and recalls that the *sari* that she is wearing on her pyre was his birthday gift for her and this was the *sari* which he had spun with his own hands. Mahatma reminds him of the *Gita*'s philosophy that only the body burns, the spirit never dies because it is eternal, and so Kasturba is and always will be there with him; he is not all alone. Ultimately Mohan submits himself to the call of his inner self and looks to him for guidance in coming days. He treats his inner self to help him in taking the right step and going for right decisions and actions. Mahatma acts accordingly and Mohan learns that the good means lead to the good ends and the bad means lead to bad ends. Gandhi feels exasperated to realise that in the name of religion pseudo concepts and prejudices are acquiring an upper status.

Sarojini Naidu informs the crowd during her speech that the new government has decided to give India freedom. But there is political chaos as Jinnah is insisting on the partition of India. After prolonged discussions among the leaders, it is felt that there is no solution to the problem. It is Gandhi alone who says there is an alternative, "the unity of the country is at stake, this is not the time for quibbling. After all, it's only about power and who forms the government. Isn't it?" (133). Jawahar and Jinnah look at him in surprise because they never thought this way. Both

agree that this is the issue of power. Mohan allows Jinnah to form the government of India. At this proposal, Jinnah becomes disturbed because he knows his power and the fact that he will not be able to prove majority for framing the government. Jinnah points out some issues which Mohan solves. Regarding the issue about the ruling princes, Mohan says that Sardar Patel is talking to the princes, so he need not worry about that. At this point Nehru warns Gandhi that he will be isolated because nobody will agree to this proposal. Gandhi tries his best to avoid partition because partition is sure to lead to a massive bloodshed. But he fails. Ultimately, partition is declared, "I have always been opposed to the partition of the country but now that it has happened with the concurrence of leaders on both sides, it is only right and proper that the division of the assets must be done precisely and correctly" (138), says Gandhi. Mohan feels unhappy because this is not the complete freedom he visualised for India. Moreover, the riots broke out after the declaration of partition. Sarojini Naidu tells Mountbatten about Mohan's unhappiness as he celebrates independence with fasting and praying. The partition of the India makes it clear that "the mind is a still slave to religious prejudices and the urge to violence" (137). Even Mountbatten recognizes the power and authority of Gandhi and has great words of praise for this great soul, "isn't it amazing? In Punjab, we have an army of 100,000 and we have riots and bloodshed. In Calcutta, there is a one-man force in the shape of Mahatma Gandhi and we have absolute peace" (137). Jawahar Lal Nehru refers to the value of the "calming influence of Gandhiji and his multi denominational prayer meetings" (138) as need of the hour.

Jawahar Lal Nehru discusses with Sarojini Naidu the problem of the country's assets division and Jinnah's demand which cannot be complied with because the country cannot afford to do so. The playwright points out Gandhi's nature of fighting for justice. Even though he does not welcome the partition, he is willing to go on a fast to support the claim of Pakistan for getting fifty-five crore rupees from India. For him "there is no national interest higher than abiding by the truth" (139). At the end of the play, the playwright focuses on Godse, Gandhi's assassin. Godse wants to kill Gandhi as in his opinion he was responsible for the partition. He is furious. And the reason is that Gandhi threatens to go on a fast for Pakistan's unjust demand for such a huge amount instead of going on a fast against the partition. Gandhi, thus, compels the Indian government to pay the amount immediately. Mahatma foresees his death and asks Mohan to be on the alert about the danger to his life:

MOHAN. (*Chuckles*) I'm late for the prayer meeting.

MAHATMA. You are in time for history. (143)

But all in vain, Godse assassinated Gandhi. The playwright compares the dead body of Gandhiji with *pieta* - the picture of Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Christ in her lap and in her arms. The play ends with Jawaharlal Nehru's homage:

The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that has shown in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illuminated this country for many more years, and a thousand years later, that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present, it represented the living, the eternal truth... (144)

The playwright, in a unique manner, presents the life journey of Gandhi and his evolution from Mohan to Mahatma. About this technique he tells at the very beginning that the focus will be on Gandhi only and the other characters who may have any impact on him will be referred to incidentally:

ACTOR. . . . One great monumental figure (Nods in the direction of Mahatma) looms out of the events as though he came readymade for history but all the little history but all

the little fellows and fillies who may have shaped him are remembered only incidentally.
(6)

The Title SAMMY means “elevated, sublime, supreme” in Arabic. There are various other references to the word Sammy but the playwright has used the word Sammy as the distorted form of the word ‘Swami’. When Gandhi comes back to South Africa, a mob of African Whites call ‘Sammy’ – a derogatory word for Indians in South Africa. He takes this word in a positive way. He gives a new explanation to this word - a teacher or master- and takes it as a challenge and decides to teach the people his principles himself in the process of his inner growth and thus proves himself a real Swami to them. The playwright has presented Gandhi’s life from a humanistic point of view. The playwright dramatises the events of Gandhi’s life, and after each event he critically examines his Psyche (inner self) and his mental conflict which leads him towards the path of being a Mahatma – a great soul. He dramatises the first event and describes how ACTOR brings Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from India to South Africa. Mohan comes as a lawyer of Dada Abdulla and faces problems on his first appearance in the court. The Magistrate criticises him for his headdress, and then asks him to take it off. This incident awakens his sense of human dignity and identity, and prompts him to struggle against the prejudices of the African Whites against the black Indians and the natives. This marks the beginning of Mohan’s journey to the status of Mahatma.

The play is made lively and interesting by his use of the dramatic devices such as wit, irony, satire and humour. Abdulla makes fun of him when Mohan tells him that one must learn the good things even from the enemy. Abdulla laughs and says that Mohan may imitate the Britishers but by doing so he will not get more respect than the chimpanzee of a zoo. At this Mohan, rather than getting angry, humorously remarks, “I’m afraid you’ve got a whole menagerie in me, Dada Abdulla. Something of a white elephant too” (10). When Mohan tries to search for God in holy books, Mahatma humorously asks him not to look up, “unless it is for exercising your neck” (40). Mohan adopts himself to life in jail so amicably that his followers and the prison inmates start calling the prison as “his majesty's hotel” (40). It is amusing for the audience to see how Smuts behaves before going to meet Mohan, “Smuts tucks the baton under his arm, adjusts his clothes and composes himself” (53). Nehru observes about the words used by Gandhiji, “co-operation is already a hyphenated word. Then we prefix ‘non’ to it and another hyphen. A word with two hyphens!” Sarojini laughingly remarks “Well, if the Soviets, after their revolution, are busy setting up cooperatives, we can set up non-cooperatives!” (93). When a journalist asks Gandhi what message he would like to give to the people, he wittily remarks that his life is his message. At the question of his being underdressed while going to meet the king, Mohan humorously remarks, “the king had enough on for both of us”(113). Similarly, when a journalist asks him to have a pair of trousers, he remarks, “You people wear plus fours, mine are minus fours” (114).

Irony plays an important role in any drama. In the present play, when Abdulla comes to know that Mohan has handled only one case in India before coming to South Africa to tackle Abdulla’s case and he could not speak any word in the court, Abdulla is very much dismayed and says, “Good Heavens! and I’m suing my cousin brother for forty thousand pounds! May Allah look kindly on my misfortune” (10). He feels that Mohan cannot win the case because he does not have the required ability to speak publicly which is the major trait of a lawyer and he has spent a huge amount for such a lawyer. But when Mohan settles the case out of court because of his intelligence and clever approach to the case, Abdulla recognises his talent and remarks, “That’s most unlike a lawyer. (*Astutely*) lawyers like to prolong cases so they can collect more fees” (18). Thus, Abdulla not only gets back the fees given to Mohan but also receives the money from his settlement.

When Mahatma asks Mohan to be like Mahavir and Buddha and search for the meaning of existence, Mohan satirically remarks, “If you were a scientist, you’d probably prefer to spend

your time searching for the secret of perpetual motion” (16). Mohan reads the *Bhagavat-Geeta* and chants its verses every morning for Europeans. Kasturba angrily objects to Mohan’s doing so, he says, “Why don't you ask all of them to come and live here? You’ll be better able to tell them of the glories of your religion and don't let them see how you misuse it at home” (32). When she criticises him for misusing his knowledge at home, he reacts, “I misuse it? Woman, Hinduism is rotting because of the blind actions of people like you” (32). At this Kasturba places a sarcastic comment “Ho! and you are going to save Hinduism as well, along with me and everybody and India and the whole world?” (32). The British government drafts a law which allows Indians to work only with their work permits. Mahatma asks him to call on law but Mohan being an Indian lawyer could not go to the court without his work permit. So, he satirically remarks, “We are being treated like outlaws by the law itself! (40). Mohan follows the principle of non-violence so devoutly that Smuts feels wounded by his devoutness. At this Mohan surprisingly remarks, “Your wounds? No one has struck you or shot at you as your mounted military police have done with the poor indentured labourers” (54). When Mohan is in Jail, Jinnah sarcastically remarks, “the days of Saville Row suits are over” for Mohan. But Nehru tells him wittily that he has made prison “the most exclusive school in the world” (94). Nehru praises him for wearing khadi and his changing prison into a school. Moreover, Nehru himself began wearing *khadi*. When Nehru tells Naidu that it is because of his wearing *khadi* that peasants call him Bapu or father and the poet Rabindranath Tagore has hailed him as Mahatma, how humorously Sarojini Naidu remarks “It is only India that knows how to honour greatness in rags. It is a homage that emperors cannot buy” (78).

The playwright admirably presents the personality of Kasturba and tries to convey that the life of Gandhi is incomplete without his wife. She has a very strong personality. She plainly shows Mohan what he is. She is very polite also. She understands the situation and asks for forgiveness whenever it seems to her that Mohan is very angry and irritated by her behaviour. She is very aware of the political and social issues of her times though she is not much educated and is always busy with household chores. The playwright makes Kasturba a very powerful character and uses her to carve out Gandhi’s character very forcibly. Both of them act as a foil to each other. As Mohan has refused to register himself as well as asked all Indians not to register so she is angry with him. She is strong enough to rebuke him when he chides her for not being able to understand the issue: “Oh? He will understand! But you cannot explain it to your own wife” (42). She is a very practical woman. She knows the importance of money. She suggests him to register himself and not to ask people to oppose it. She tells him that if he is not registered, he will not be able to practice at bar and that will lead to a problem to the family as well as for the public:

MOHAN. Is that all you care about? Money, money, money?

KASTURBA. It’s high time you thought of it too. If you can’t feed yourself and your family how will you provide for the masses? Don’t look so surprised. (43)

This point of Kasturba makes Mohan think deeply. He decides to give up his job first and put himself to the test first. Mahatma praises Mohan for his decision, “No one before this has attempted to use individual moral force as a vehicle of group action” (44).

Sharma has presented two aspects of feminism - one is, that of, Kasturba Gandhi and the other is, that of, Sarojini Naidu. Kasturba Gandhi stands for the suppressed feminism while Sarojini Naidu symbolizes the progressive feminism. It is because of their age difference and their upbringing in different cultures. Kasturba was born in 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat while Sarojini Naidu was born in 1879 in Hyderabad. The family of Kasturba was an orthodox family while Sarojini Naidu’s family was progressive. Still both justified their stands, and they strongly asserted themselves against the prevailing male chauvinism. Kasturba disagrees with Gandhi and even speaks ill of him but she withdraws her words and apologises when her husband gets angry. She strongly expresses her unwillingness to clean the chamber pot, and protests her

husband's learning of *Bhagavat-Geeta* to teach it to Europeans. Like a loving mother, she deeply protests Gandhi's action - not getting his children admitted to good schools. She, in her own way, censures Gandhi for not allowing his eldest son to avail of the scholarship granted by the committee simply because he was a member of the committee. In fact, this injustice completely ruined his son's career, and for this Gandhi could never forgive himself. Does it not show Kasturba Gandhi's bold feminism that enabled her to vehemently criticize Gandhi, and fight for the birthright of her son. "He is the Mahatma, a man the world venerates as a prophet of peace, but for Kasturba, the child bride who married the boy next door, Mohandas was a sexually driven, self-righteous, and overbearing husband" (Adhar)Partap Sharma thinks that Kasturba was aware of her dependence on Gandhi and her inferior status in the family, and that is why she yielded to the will of her husband. Had she been independent, she would have freely and fearlessly expressed her views against many things that Gandhi, her venerable husband, did. Financial independence matters a lot in any woman's life. Sarojini Naidu was independent; she was a poet; she was a leader. She frankly tells Gandhi about the low - quality food that he was enjoying when she met him in London, and offers him a good lunch. Partap Sharma has presented these two characters in contrast by showing that both the woman are feminists but one is not able to lead her life in her own way just because of her dependence on her husband, and the other lives her life on her own terms simply because she is independent both socially and economically. The playwright also throws light on the character and personality of Jawahar Lal Nehru. Even Jawahar Lal Nehru is eager to learn the secrets of leadership and wishes to be a great leader like Gandhi. When Gandhi meets him, he humbly says, "My first thought on being released from prison was to come to you, Gandhiji. We've got to talk. We've got to understand each other. Sometimes you leave me completely bewildered" (85).

The theme of the play is presented through the two-sided personality of Gandhi – Mohan cum Mahatma and Mohan versus Mahatma. Mahatma explains that he as an actor must act like "Lincoln in Drinkwater's play" (11) to forget himself in the role assigned to him. Mohan reacts to it as "This is not life. We are on stage" (11). The words invite action. When a character speaks, the audience knows what action is going to take place - "ABDULLA: Wait! You must understand, Mohan. Mohan!" (7). The playwright uses a kind of effective technique to present the thought process of Mohan on stage. Soliloquies are no more used in modern drama technique. So, he personifies the mind of Gandhiji on the stage as Mahatma and presents his inner self by speaking out.

The playwright uses four main actors who are acting for many characters involved in the entire action of the play. Just as in actual life one must play many roles, similarly here in this play, an actor is playing many roles. In the very first scene, the ACTOR states, "I'm part of the ensemble that will depict the other characters. That's how it is in life, isn't it?"(5). The play is unique in the sense that the playwright makes his actors talk about their own techniques. When he first presents Mohan and Mahatma, his characters themselves make it clear how they are going to be treated in the whole play. Mahatma clarifies to Mohan that Mohan is Mohan and Mahatma is Mahatma. It does not matter that both are the same person on the stage. All are playing a role in the great drama of life. Mahatma admits that they being actors do not pretend and admit that they are acting:

MOHAN. So how do you want me to go about this acting?

(wily) With Brechtian 'alienation' or ... (Grimly) the deep involvement of the Stanislavsky Method?

MAHATMA. (smiles) I want you to go about it with simultaneity.

MOHAN. Simultaneity? That's a new one. (11)

The playwright is very well versed with modern dramatic techniques. He shows his knowledge of the following techniques - Brechtian 'alienation' and Stanislavsky Method and finally he makes his character speak that he is going to use a new technique – the technique of

Simultaneity. This technique is new to modern stage design and drama. In narrative, simultaneity is a relation between two actions on the level of the narrated, and the narration – concurrent acts of speech by two or more narrating instances - and at the nexus of the two levels i.e. concurrent narration. There can be more than one simultaneous event and actions- mental or verbal, physical on the narrated level. There may be involvement of more than one agent - mental and physical, mental and verbal, and verbal and physical activities being portrayed. Here in the play two or more agents are involved, comparisons and contrasts have become meaningful as the same kind of simultaneous activity is undertaken. It creates the image of a supra-individual collective agent. The dramatist desires to make the readers perceive the story elements as juxtaposed in space rather than unfolding in time. Thus, the flow of the story is interrupted and the attention is directed to the interpretation/ interplay between the levels inside the scene. The playwright presents speech and the mental images (of Gandhiji) crossing his mind at the same time, side by side. The playwright shows the incident, and immediately he shows the immediate impact. One cannot see three sides of a statue at one time, but in a play, we come close to simultaneously differing viewpoints which are called a type of theatrical cubism which is deftly used by the playwright. The audience sees various shades of the personality of Gandhi.

He also asks how to treat both the personalities like Brechtians' alienation. Bertolt Brecht puts forward the theory of alienation in which familiar contents are presented as unfamiliar just to release a new effect so that the audience can think profoundly about the drama. The audience need not emphasise the story of the drama or Stanislavsky Method. This method, developed by Konstantin Stanislavsky in 1900 helps actors in generating believable actions and emotions in the characters they portray. This is not the Mohan actually; this is Partap Sharma who is telling the audience how the different personalities are going to be treated here in the play. Here he invents his own technique that is "Simultaneity" (11). The technique depicts objects from separate vantage points. He analyses Mohan and Mahatma from separate vantage points.

Sharma divides the play into two acts. His division of acts demarcates his success of *Satyagraha* in South Africa and in India. His first act covers the incidents of Gandhiji's life from his coming to South Africa to his success there, and his second act covers the incidents from his coming to India to achieving freedom for the nation, and finally his death in 1948. The playwright has no political alignment. He has presented what was there in the political scenario. He makes Godse protest why Gandhi did not go on fast against partition as he did on other occasions. He thinks that had he done so; partition could have been avoided. But the playwright presents only what Godse thought without making any comment of his own. He has tried to present the scenario very objectively.

There are many plays written on the political life and personality of Gandhiji. Ravindra Tripathi has written *Pahla Satyagrahi* which was the first play to be staged by Suresh Sharma, director in charge of National School of Drama in New Delhi to mark the 150th anniversary of Gandhiji. It traces the evaluation of a leader through freedom movements. Another play *Yugpurush- Mahatma Na Mahatma* is written by the well-known Marathi playwright Uttam Gada, and directed by an acclaimed director Rajesh Joshi. It was also written to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. This play deals with the relationship between Shrimad Rajchandraji and Gandhiji. It describes how the teachings of Shrimad Ji helped Gandhiji in making him Mahatma. R. K. Paliwal has written a play *Kasturba* – a new production of Qadir Ali Baig theatre foundation in Delhi. It describes the emotional bond and mutual respect between Gandhiji and Ba. It covers the period between 1942 - 1944. Thus, there are many plays written on the same theme but all of them depict only one or the other aspect of Gandhiji's life. Partap Sharma's present play is unique in the sense that he has presented the complete transformation of Gandhi's personality from Mohan to Mahatma, and that too in a unique manner by his newly devised simultaneity technique.

Gandhi Serve Foundation website rightly observes;

The play is important not just as a powerful piece of theatre, but is specially relevant because of the times we live in, where the Mahatma's creed of non-materialism and non-violence is sorely needed in an age of terrorism and consumerism. (“Theatre: Sammy!”)

Though the dramatist chose a personality about whom many persons have written, his unique style and dramatic technique have made the play a great success. He has covered all the major and significant incidents of his political life that transformed Gandhi from Mohan to Mahatma. He has tried to bring out all the aspects - good as well as bad – of personality. By doing so he has presented before us a Gandhi who is a living - human being, and not a wooden puppet or stony statue. One may sum up in the words of Peter Ruhe, *Gandhi Serve*, Berlin that the play is “Outstanding. Sammy is by far the most interesting comprehensive, dramatic work on Gandhi. A great play!” (Sharma, Blurb).

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