

Prof. Johan Galtung

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Promoting Gandhian Values outside India-1993

Prof. Johan Galtung was born on 24th October, 1930 in Oslo, Norway. He has a Doctorate from the University of Oslo in Mathematics (1956) and also in Sociology (1957). He is Dr. Honoris Causa of the University of Tampere, Finland in Peace Studies (1975), a Dr. Honoris Causa of the University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (1976) in Future Studies, at the University of Uppsala, Sweden and at Soka University, Tokyo.

He was Assistant Professor of Sociology (1957-60) of the Columbia University, New York. His mentor, teacher and colleague in Social Science and Philosophy were Professor Arne Naese, in collaboration with whom he wrote "Gandhi's Political Ethics". With this intellectual background, he joined the University of Oslo as a Professor of Peace and Conflict Research in 1969. After having founded the International Peace Research Institute in 1959, Prof. Galtung was its Director from 1959-69. He gave concrete shape to its research activities through hard work and sagacity. He invited scholars from different parts of the world and arranged Peace Conferences, organised Lectures on subjects like "Theory of Peace", "Theory of Conflict", "Methodology of Peace Research" etc. He also started the Journal of Peace Research in 1964 and was its Editor from 1964 to 1974. He was the Project Coordinator from 1979 to 1981, United Nations University, Geneva, and Special Consultant at the Second Special Session on Disarmament (U.N. 1981). He has been a Consultant to UNESCO, UNCTAD, WHO, UNEP, UN 100, FAO, UNO, OECD, and ECC.

With his immense scholarship on Inter-Disciplinary subjects like Peace Research, Conflict Resolution etc., Galtung has earned the fame as a world-renowned social scientist and is associated with many Universities. He has been a Visiting Professor to several Universities such as University of Essex, England (1967-1969), International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan (1970), University of Cairo, Egypt (1971), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India (1971), University of Zurich, Switzerland (1971-72), University of Hawaii, Honolulu (1973), Royal Academy of Arts, Copenhagen, Denmark (1976), Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris (1979-81), University of West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad (1981) and Freie Universitat Belin, Germany (1983).

Professor Johan Galtung has been a prolific writer. His books are noted for deep thought, great scholarship and prescient knowledge of subjects like Non-violence, Peace, Harmony between peoples and nations, development through peace and co-related subjects mainly drawn from the inspiration gathered from the thoughts, the teachings, the practices provided by Mahatma Gandhi's life and work.

Among his important publications are:

"Disarmament and the Cold War" - 1988, "Methodology and Development" - 1988, "Solving Conflicts - a Peace Research Perspective" - 1989, "Gandhi Today, The Way is Goal" - 1992. Certain manuscripts are in preparation and will soon be published. These include "Theories of Peace", "Cultural Violence," "Perestroika U.S. - On the Roots of U.S. Aggressiveness", "Strategy for Development and Structural Violence". His phenomenal output can be seen from the fact that he has authored about 1000 publications and in addition, as many as 60 books are either in manuscript or in print.

Professor Galtung is a linguist being proficient in Norwegian, English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and also some Russian. His post-graduate programme of Peace Studies Around the World, of taking multinational groups of University students of various peace centres in the world is not only popular but is also a lasting and dynamic contribution to the promotion of international

harmony which was among the foremost of the values that Gandhiji cherished. Prof. Galtung has delivered the Kamalnayan Bajaj lectures on Peace and Non-violence. Eight Universities have conferred honorary doctorates or Professorships on him for his outstanding contribution to Peace and Non-violence and social sciences.

Professor Johan Galtung is not merely a Professor or theoretician propagating Gandhian values. He practises these virtues in his personal life and also by adherence to nature cure on Gandhian lines for his family. He was a conscientious objector against military conscription and underwent half-a-year imprisonment as a result. He was one of the founders and inspirers of the Greens Movement in Europe which openly acknowledged Gandhiji as the source of inspiration to work for a self-reliant society living in close friendship with nature. He even conducted a course in Satyagraha at Hawaii University and always refers to Gandhi's theory and practice in his lectures and writings.

The inspiration for reflecting on Gandhi, says Prof. Galtung, was provided to him when he was a prisoner undergoing a sentence for resisting military conscription. Prison life, he says, "makes one see society from another angle and above all, one realises very clearly that the line between good people and bad people is not drawn by the prison wall. Sometimes one might even feel that the proportion of bad people is higher outside than inside, only they are too clever to get caught" Acknowledging his indebtedness to Gandhi, he said that "when one gets beyond the fascination with the political Gandhi and the awe for the religious Gandhi, a respect for the intellectual Gandhi, Gandhi the Analyst, remains permanent." Gandhi was critical of much that was ancient and also much that was modern in our civilisation and in that critique, according to Prof. Galtung, he finds somewhere to stand much more fundamental than just Hinduism: A general sense of humanity and history of unity of man, even unity of life making him reject equally vehemently the rampant structural violence of the Hindu caste system and Western capitalist, imperialism, as the violence of colonialism and communal strife".

Prof. Johan Galtung summarises the quintessence of the personality of Gandhi in one pithy and pregnant sentence. "Rare Person Indeed and Particularly in our Unfortunate Century".

