



**Dr. Justice Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari (Retd.)**

**Gandhian Thinker**

**Chief Guest-2012**

Chairman of Jamnalal Bajaj Trust, Shri Rahul Bajaj, all the members of the Advisory Committee, Award Recipients, Dignitaries, Ladies and Gentleman. Maharashtra' is the only state whose name contains the word 'Rashtra', and with the presence of all of you amidst us today, this spirit would be brought to light, we believe.

These awards are named after Shri Jamnalalji Bajaj. In fact, these are not awards, but are our grateful felicitations. It is with these feelings that I heartily congratulate and salute the recipients. For me personally, this award ceremony is very special and makes me feel proud. In 1981, such an honour was bestowed upon my father Dada Dharmadhikari.

Mahatma Gandhi had said about his fifth son Jamnalalji that "He did not earn a single pie through unethical means and whatever he earned, he spent it all for the good of the people." Rather than an owner, he remained a trustee of his wealth. Significance of these awards is that they are named after a person who had received such testimonial from the greatest individual of this millennium. This does not have any element of 'donation'; it is a symbol of participation.

Before his assassination, and after the political independence of India, Gandhiji had presented 18 legislative programmes and termed them as programmes of 'Surajya' - 'Good Governance'. Gandhiji never used the word 'Independence'. His word was 'Swarajya', meaning freedom from all sorts of bondage whether political, economic, social or even religious. Shri Jaywant Mathkarji is receiving the award for exemplary contribution in constructive work. Gandhiji fought against all that was wrong, and demonstrated how to harmonise and balance the societal structuring through constructive work. This is what is the mission of Mathkarji's life.

Someone asked me the reason for correlating the basis of all these awards to Gandhian ideology. It was argued that when service and science and technology are all neutral, what they have to do with Gandhian thought. In this context, I would humbly suggest that if 'neutrality' is devoid of sensitivity and empathy, that neutrality is of no avail. A stone is not 'neutral'; it is totally 'insensitive'.

Mahatma Gandhi considered 'science without empathy' and 'worship without detachment' as social sins. The cardinal question is, whether science would empower man or would, by dispossessing him, eliminate both man and humanity. This award, in the realm of science and technology, belongs to Science + Spirituality (or Humanity) which I call Science + Gandhi. All these awards are given for 'human welfare', what Gurudev Ravindranath Tagore referred to as 'Manusher Narayan' and Gandhi as 'Daridra Narayan'. The work that Shri Kalyan Paulji is doing in Uttaranchal - not only in his work, but even in his name there is 'Kalyan' (welfare).

The next step beyond 'liberation of women' that Gandhiji and Vinoba took was that for 'women empowerment.' Today, even the birth of a girl child is not welcome, what to talk about her

empowerment! How can someone unwanted be empowered? An award in this sphere is given to the one, who has worked for the welfare of women folk and advanced the cause of women empowerment. This year, Smt. Nighat Shafi of Kashmir is the recipient of this award. She is a unique exemplar of 'Matru Shakti' (mother power) and 'shanti sainik' (peace soldier). It is only a women peace soldier who can work towards wiping out terrorism. She uniquely personified this spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, and emerged as 'Shanti Durga' in entirety of its meaning. Poet Habib Jalib's couplet fits her perfectly:

*Those armed with guns are scared of an unarmed girl  
Spread is the brightness of courage of an unarmed girl*

Gandhiji's birthday on 2nd October is being celebrated as the International Day of Non-Violence. Ahimsa does not mean just absence of violence or massacre; moreover it is not a negative element. Gandhi's non-violence is a positive dynamic ideology. It is not just peace, which could also be peace of a graveyard. Ahimsa was a 'sevayagya' of the freedom from all forms of exploitation. And this noble work is being carried out by Prof. Glen Page even at this advanced age.

What inspires service is basic interest and self-propulsion. Such inspiration is neither physical nor religious; it is humane. Changing the present social condition involves changing the direction of relationship between human beings as also its context, which means changing the direction of the development of life. And through it, move forward towards holistic change of life along with societal change. Social workers are the symbols of it. Their role is creative and prescriptive. While very few people are able to do this, only they can prepare the society's psyche for the change. That is why, in our country, social service is not just some relief work; it is a holy task of converting pessimism into optimism, an auspicious act of awakening self-respect.

It's not morning just because of sunrise. Rather, it is when we wake up that the morning dawns. This 'awakening' will have to be ushered in the entire society. Until now, our saints and social workers only have undertaken this task of societal change. They neither had power nor riches. All they had was compassion. They also did not hold any post of authority, but they were held in highest esteem. I consider these selfless social workers as the 'Projection' and 'Breathing' centres of our society.

In the field of journalism, only that which is not a normal rule or which is exceptional or abnormal becomes news worthy. It now seems that 'honesty' or 'good moral conduct' should make news for only they are not common precepts to follow. Nowadays, only corruption, dishonesty or injustice and exploitation have become the common denominator of political, social, economic, and religious life.

The present day conditions of our so called religious country is such that it is difficult to find a single person, even with the help of a highly sophisticated telescope, against whom charges have not been, or cannot be levelled. Anti-corruption activists have levelled or want to level charges against the Rashtrapati, Prime Minister, Chief Justice. Such a picture of India has been painted as if the whole country and countrymen are corrupt. Who will decide as to how far this picture of India is true or false, especially when there is not one area, organisation or system which has not been levied or can be levied charges of corruption. Jesus had averred, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone". Not one person from the crowd came forward. Such is the case with India. This is the greatest misfortune.

Greek saint Dionysius was unique in his own way. Once he went out in broad day light with a lantern. An acquaintance asked him, "Why this lantern in daylight?" The saint politely replied, "I am in search of a gentleman. All the people of Athens don't see a single one in the city. They all keep finding faults with each other. So I thought I could find one in the light of this lantern." Same is the case with India. Nobody

here can see a person of character. Allegations and counter allegations are hurled at each other that all the people and organisations are mired in corruption. Experiments are being made to burn and destroy the temple itself if it is infested with mosquitoes. The cardinal question before us is that how to bring a desired 'Janlokpal' even if the 'Lokpal' Bill is passed. Who could become such a 'Lokpal'? Do we have the answer? Even those who are accusing have no answer to this. There is no alternative to hitting, with your shoe, the scorpion sitting on the Shiv idol; and it is essential to have the prudence to realize that the intention was not to hit the idol. Otherwise, the whole country and Indian culture will be destroyed. This is our agony. The situation is if any one takes any decision will face an allegation of corruption. As such, the authorities have stopped taking decision itself. The administration has come to stand still. Is it what we want? Just think about it.

The question is, if all political parties, social and religious organisations and citizens are against corruption, then who is indulging in it? Are those not equally responsible for corruption that are speaking against it and leading the movement? According to the western philosopher Kahlil Gibran, a single leaf of a tree cannot dry or turn pale until it has the silent approval of the whole tree. Thus, we all give our silent approval for corruption. A poet has rightly said-

*“Wherever my eyes reached  
I saw the same spectators  
In the hot, scorching sun  
I saw the same glass tents.”*

Addressing his Comrades, the former Chinese President Hu Jin Tao said, “Corruption has hollowed the whole nation. This disease has reached at the level of the Party too. If corruption is not dealt with in time, not only the Party but the whole administration will be devastated and will collapse.” All those out of power talk against corruption, but after occupying the post, follow the previous dispensation. The post may be that of a social, educational, religious organisation or the one based on Vivekanand or Gandhian ideology. The difference is one of degrees only. And we ourselves want to shape India after China and Mumbai after Shanghai.

Do we have, among us, in India, a 'Janlokpal' that we or all citizens expect him to be? Because everyone is facing allegations of corruption. If we go about searching such a person in the field of religion, almost all the religious trusts and the so called 'Dharm Purush' who are running them too are immersed in such sins. Then wherefrom do we bring such a 'Lokpal'? A thought has to be given to this aspect. Or, shall we have to 'import' such a person? I have spent half of my life in judiciary as a lawyer or a judge and have conducted cases of right from Shankaracharya to the best of leaders and dignitaries. All of them took oath in the name of Bhagwad Gita, Quran, Bible to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. But none of them spoke 100% truth. I have not come across a witness speaking 100% truth. In such a situation, where from will you bring a desired 'Janlokpal'?

There is a story about Swami Vivekanand. Swamiji went for morning walk wearing the clothes which needed minimum stitching by the tailor. A young couple, wearing modern clothes, passed through Swamiji. The lady whispered to her husband, “He does not look like a gentleman.” Swamiji heard this, came back and told her, “This is the difference in your country and my country. In your country, tailor makes the gentleman, where as in my country, character makes the gentleman.” We have honoured such ideal people with high morals.

In conclusion, I wish to just say as much about those who received the awards that

Respect these hands  
They conduct the affairs of this world  
Salute these hands  
They pen the stories of the world and of humanity

And they are such social workers that –  
*"None could have an idea of their stature,  
Who are sky-high, yet walk with heads bowed."*

I proffer my profound respects to them and all of you.

Jai Hind - Jai Jagat

