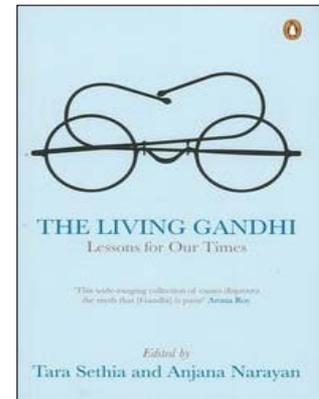


BOOK EXCERPT

Title : The Living Gandhi - Lessons for Our Times
Authors : Tara Sethia and Anjana Narayan
Publisher : Penguin Books
Pages : 334
Price : Rs. 399/-



Much has changed in India and the world since the time of Gandhi. This has led to the belief that Gandhi's thoughts do not have any relevance in today's world. The contributors to this book, mostly academics, in a series of analytical essays attempt to debunk this belief and persuade the reader that the legacy of Gandhian wisdom could provide answers to many of today's problems.

Our T.V. channels often have debates on secularism. Anthony Parel analyses Hind Swaraj, a 100 Page book written by Gandhi over 65 years ago, defining in clear terms the meaning of secularism and the need for the separation between nation and religion. However unlike Anthony Parel who steers clear of commenting how far India has strayed from the Gandhian path. Mira Kamder is highly critical of the lip service paid to Gandhi after his death. She points out that India is one of the largest buyers of armaments and chose to become a nuclear power. It is also the home to the world's largest Maoist insurgency. Disregarding Gandhi's advice about simple living, India and the world went on a spree of unbridled consumption which has resulted in depleting natural resources on an unprecedented scale.

Akeel Bilgrami says that Gandhi chose the strategy of non-violence because constitutional change took too long. It was also an opportunity to involve all Indians in a mass movement. However Gandhi's emphasis on the moral or soul force underlying his philosophy was also an important factor which Akeel Bilgrami seems to have overlooked. All those interested in leadership, whether in the social or business sector, will find the essay on Lessons from Gandhi's Leadership by James O'Toole both practical and inspiring. Rajni Bakshi identifies persons who have put into practice the ideas and values of Gandhi. Among them are Bill Drayton who established the Ashoka Foundation to encourage social entrepreneurship and Amy Domini a stockbroker in the USA who pioneered the concept of S.R.I. (Socially Responsible Investing).

The essay on 'Non-violence studies' as a subject of study in the school curriculum of some American Schools is very relevant in the light of increasing violence among youth. This book makes a significant contribution to a deeper understanding of Gandhi's thoughts and the lessons they provide in the times in which we live.

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