

Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences
Vadodara

&

Institute of Policy Research and International Studies
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara

Jointly Organize

A National Seminar

on

**Gandhi and Time-Binding:
Interface between Principles and Practices**

23 & 24 January 2018

Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda and the Institute of Policy Research and International Studies, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara jointly organize a two day national seminar on **Gandhi and Time-Binding: Interface Between Principles and Practices** during **23&24 January 2018**.

Concept Note

The seminar attempts to read Gandhian principles and practices in the light of time-binding, which is the capability to 'summarize, digest and appropriate the labours and experiences of the past' for the benefit of the present and the future generations. Time-binding is a conscious undertaking that makes a human being 'the inheritor of bygone ages and trustee of posterity'. Time-binding as explained by the Polish-

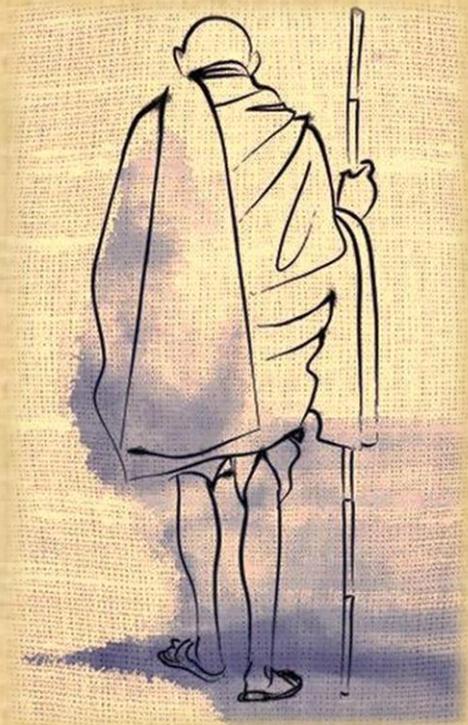


American thinker, Alfred J. Korzybski has an integrated vision of knowing, being and doing. Its aspiration is human weal. Korzybski, who brought new perspectives into the understanding of time, language, philosophy and pedagogy, was shocked into contemplation after his experiences during the First World War. Korzybski's sense of history and acute observation of life launched him on a quest through *Manhood of Humanity* (1921) and *Science and Sanity* (1933) which resulted in a functional understanding of human being as a time-binder. A time-binder is capable of transferring and building upon ideas, knowledge and experiences from the past for the advantage of the present and the future

generations. Korzybski believed that such a trusteeship of knowledge and experiential insights comes with an ethical responsibility.

Gandhi's engagement with knowledge and experiences of the bygone ages was through texts, contexts, interactions with people and observation of life-worlds. He has been keenly receptive, at the same time critical and creative in that engagement. The stages of his experiment also immersed him in moments of self-doubt, disillusionment and rethinking. *My Experiments with Truth: An Autobiography* deals with Gandhi's tireless and inconclusive experiments with principles and performance, elaborating on how certain spiritual, political, and ethical insights and works of thinkers have influenced him and how innovatively he turned ideas and ideals into practices based on his needs, cultural realities, environments and lived-experiences.

The aspiration behind such an experiment was to realize the superior self. In his opinion, such a realization would make possible a



higher level of individual and social life. Gandhi believed that when this aspiration becomes a collective endeavor, humanity will experience a remarkable spiritual and ethical enrichment and freedom from bondages, including colonialism.

From different ideological perspectives, locations and times, Gandhi's experiments may look successful, utopian and of timeless or limited significance. Gandhi's own ambivalence as a conformist and dissenter to his times influenced the course of several of his experiments. However, Gandhian experiments tell the story not of passive learning and acceptance; but active, continuous quest, moments of uncertainty and challenges. Most importantly, Gandhi did not stop searching for methods to translate his evolving convictions into ways of everyday living. His life was a conscious attempt to internalize and integrate the ideas and ideals into a viable philosophy of being and doing. The attempt had its strengths and shortcomings as his exponents and detractors illustrate.

Gandhi argued that realizing lofty ideals is not possible if the smallest, quotidian parts are neglected. The apparently commonplace aspects of life such as diet, clothing, cleanliness, dealing with the desires and passions of the body and the like were informed by the principles that had inspired him. The tight interconnectedness of Gandhian ideas and practices – truth, non-violence, brahmacharya, satyagraha, philosophy of education, organization of his ashram, ways of resisting the colonial power, strategies for decolonizing the mind – is not accidental.

Gandhian principles and practices have been adopted into many struggles across the world. Generations of theorists and practitioners have looked up in awe, embraced, appropriated, rejected, critiqued or condemned his views for various reasons. Even after many decades of his demise, there are several kinds of theoretical and practical engagement with his works and philosophy of life across the world. The seminar will look at the life and principles of Gandhi in an across time, focusing on the shaping, sharing, transformation, and reception of ideas and practices.

You may think around these issues and many more:

- Can there be different ways conceptualizing and practicing time-binding?
- How different is Gandhi's understanding of history and time as an interconnected continuum of past-present-future?

- How time-binding worked in the Phoenix settlement, Tolstoy farm and the ashrams where Gandhi experimented with and transformed the idea of cooperative coexistence?
- How Gandhi adopted principles from religious scriptures and teaching of spiritual masters (eg. Satya, dharma, ahimsa, aparigraha, love, kindness, compassion, non-attachment, self-reliance, etc.) and translated them into ways of everyday functioning and strategies of social reform and anti-colonial struggle?
- How in Gandhian thought, the integration of past-present-future; experience-knowledge; principles-practice, etc. are made viable?
- How the Gandhian methods contribute to the understanding, practice and rethinking about time-binding?

(Prepared by Bini B.S)

Submission Deadline

300-word abstract of the paper is due by **December25, 2017**. The abstract should be sent as an email attachment to: lajwanti.chatani@gmail.com with a copy to binisajil@gmail.com. Please mention your full name, Department and institutional affiliation in the abstract.

You will be informed whether your abstract is selected by **31 December 2017**. Selected participants should send the registration fee by **January10, 2018**.

Registration Fees

Rs. 1000 (For faculty)

Rs. 500 (For students)

Registration Deadline

The last date for receiving the registration fee is **January10, 2018**. The fee may be paid through an Account Payee cheque/ a Demand Draft favoring 'Balvant Parekh Centre for GS & OHS' payable in any bank in Baroda. You may also do a direct bank transfer and the account details would be provided upon request. For the details of bank transfer, write to binisajil@gmail.com. Those who wish to attend without presenting a paper also have to pay the registration fee and submit such details as name, department and institutional affiliation by email.

The registration fee will take care of lunch and tea during the seminar. The fee does not include the cost of accommodation in Baroda and is non-refundable. If you require accommodation, do get in touch with the convener and coordinator on email.

Publication in *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*

Select papers from the seminar will be included in *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*, published by Balvant Parekh Centre. Completed papers (4000-6000 words, latest MLA style) for the seminar volume/ special issue of *Anekaant* should reach Bini B.S. as email attachments by **April 30, 2018**.

For details, contact:

Convener

Professor Lajwanti Chatani

Officiating Director

Institute of Policy Research and International Studies

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Email: director-policyresearch@msubaroda.ac.in/lajwanti.chatani@gmail.com

Coordinators

Bini B.S

Academic Fellow and Editor of *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*

Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda

Email: binisajil@gmail.com

Aparna Vijayan

Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Email: aparna.vijayan-polsci@msubaroda.ac.in/apuv1210@gmail.com