

11d Prabhudas Gandhi - 19860312 - B - opt

Long cart. Q1. He had to sit outside first and then on the lowest stage and he refused and he became hit by the cart.

But you can't remember any of such incidents? Krishnamurti. No, I have seen, I have given this in this book. The incident was there in Durban, that I saw.

My youngest uncle, Nandas Gandhi, the younger one, who was with Gandhiji in Tosca farm and Mr. Kalmбет, he was returning to India. Nandas was the father of Kanubai? Kanubai, yes. Kanubai was his father.

He was third. First was my father. Second was Mugilal Gandhi.

Third was Nandas Gandhi. And fourth was Nandas Gandhi. All four were Bapu's soldiers.

So, Nandas Gandhi, after the settlement, not settlement but after release, the struggle was stopped. The least much settlement was to be done, it was not yet done. But, you know, before that, before third, Honourable Gokhale had come to South Africa.

And when he returned, it was thought that now there will be Gandhi's much settlement and no struggle more. So, he was not even twenty at that time. And he had come here, he left his studies and went with us, with my father and with me to South Africa.

And after that, my grandfather asked him to come and come and stay with me. So, he told Bapu that I will go, but the struggle starts. You give me the basic and I will come again.

And he came and that is how I have done that. But when he was going on boat in the German dockyard, we went in the night because the steamer was to go in early morning. So, at night, at nine or so, two sons of Gandhi lived, Manilal Gandhi and... No, only Manilal Gandhi.

I think Devdas Gandhi also. Manilal Gandhi and Devdas Gandhi are same as I am. So, Devdas Gandhi, myself, Jamnarlal Gandhi, Manilal Gandhi and Manilal Gandhi.

I don't remember properly that Devdas's office was there or not. I was there. My uncle was going.

So, we went to dockyard. The tram was going from city to dockyard. There, it was upper stair, two-storey stair.

And in upper stair, there was a rule there that unwhite are to sit backwards, not forwards. Coloured people. Coloured people, unwhite.

Yes, coloured people. We were coloured. And when we went upstorey, it was night time, so it was quite empty.

So, we just went in front and sat in front. And conductor came. And conductor said, go back.

No, we will sit here, we don't want. No, this is not for, this is only for whites. This is reserved.

No, you go to reserved seats. It was called reserved. For coloured, it was reserved.

Go to reserved seat. We didn't go. Then, you must go, we shan't go.

You must go, get up. Because I remember that they said, we shan't do it. Then you will be pushed.

Then you go, you get up. You don't get up. Then caught hands of my uncle, Maganlal Gandhi.

And he alarmed. So, the driver, English driver, he also came up. High people, they were very... He was more of a warrior.

He was tough. Both picked up my uncle. He didn't leave the bars.

Given so much time they had. Then they thrown him from upper sector. He was thrown out.

Means upper deck was open. The windows were open. Windows were open and he was... He was thrown out from there.

Thrown out there that I won't go. Then both caught him, put him up and thrown him. And he was also startled.

These two were just like champions, very big bodies. And they were two. And we can't... Only we don't... We won't get up.

We won't beat them. But you did not start to argue with them. They are... We don't believe that we will stay here.

We are also... Many are many. It is empty. We are sitting here.

What is the lot? No. You are to sit there. You are doctor.

So when he was dropped down from such a... He got one bar and stuck. So he was saved. He was not... Then they pushed Manilal uncle.

And he was knocked and knocked and he was out. So all the three or four was beaten and got down. I was not inside until I got down.

And then when we got down, tram went away. And you had to walk to support. We had to walk.

The next time, Manilal uncle said, I have seen the number. Let the tram return. We will go again on that.

But it was midnight. It should be done by the tram. So we walked also.

I think about three or four miles in the night to the city. And became this incident known afterwards in the newspapers? Was it printed or published somewhere? That the other Indians at least came to know it? No, I don't think so. No? I don't think... Even in our paper, in newspaper it was written.

It is given here. Remember. In your book? It is given here, it is India also.

But this is an important incident, I mean... That is how blackies are not wanted. Yes. Blackies are not allowed.

So, myself, when any upper class people, they dishonour lower class people, I can't bear that. Because I have seen how we were also kicked out. We were kicked, smashed, killed.

And you think nowadays the situation became worse? Very bad, very bad. That time they only wanted us to stay in order. Now they don't let us.

They say, you will be killed, you are not to live, you will be smashed, you will be killed. Yes. At that time we were beaten, now we are killed.

But also then, in those days you had to live in your own quarters or you could mix with British people. I mean, not yourself, because you lived in Phoenix, in Trotse form afterwards. But the Indians say they could mix with... No, Indian, Indian also, quite different.

In Durban also, you can't walk on the beach, where these European people, European children play. We can't play on that ground. That playground, we can't go there.

Because we were not white people. Asian and Africans not allowed in there. Yes.

But how did you see it as a child? I mean, you grew up under those conditions. Was it very sad for you to see, or was it very hurting for you as a child? It was that we have to struggle and struggle and struggle. And because of this bad treatment, the opposition which grew under the leadership of Gandhi became more strong.

They want to rule on us. They don't want to... We are not free to do all things. We will have our freedom with us.

That's all I think. We are not lesser people. As good as our status, we don't accept the low status.

We do not accept that. And you felt you have some power to fight against this little system? Then? We can't... Not felt, but we were ready. We said we will have to go to jail.

We will have you punished. We will have some beatings also. But we'll do what our Indian... Indian... We say Gujarati.

We won't bend. The prestige of India should not go. For the prestige of India, we have to suffer and suffer.

And... The honour of India should be not less. It was not... Honour should be there. We must be honoured.

And we will fight for our honour. That was the spirit. And when Gandhiji developed his way of fighting, was he influenced by former politicians or former people who used non-violent resistance in the same way or in a similar way? I mean, as he was influenced by Tolstoy for the way of how he ran his ashram.

No, he read some books. He read some books. He read Thoreau.

He read Ruskin. He used to read Tolstoy, but he developed his own idea. Yes.

And he also asked the ashram members to read also. Then he said, for our freedom, how to give our whole life and whole being to him. He said, not suffering, but what do you say, give all your things to him.

Sacrifice. Sacrifice, yes. Our sacrifice should be not less than the highest mould.

We are also soldiers. We will give our sacrifice, but we will die, not kill. We are to die not to kill.

That was his slogan. Everyone suffered except him. And how many Indians were it at the beginning who followed these ideas? I think you mentioned in your book the first satyagrahis were just seven people or so.

Sixteen. It's the first satyagraha movement. Sixteen.

Sixteen was the first party which Gandhiji sent from Phoenix. Yes. With three women, is it right? Four.

Four women. Four women. Yes.

My mother, my aunt, and one lady from, she was not so old, she was a lady, nurse lady. Of an Indian friend, no? Daughter of an Indian friend or wife? Daughter of an Indian friend. I see.

And how was the role of women in this satyagraha struggle? They had a special duty there. What was that duty? In jail. No, then after, these four women were forced to have arrest.

After that, about fourteen or so, eighteen or fourteen, ladies came out, forced to leave. And they went to every mine, in every field, and asked that, customer, if you drink, you are not supposed to have sex. They, they, they, they were the ladies who preached the strikers.

Strikers, strikers, strikers. All the strikers came out by their, their teachings, their lectures. And those ladies also, they went to jail.

There was one Muslim lady also went. Many Tamil lady went. Gujarati lady went.

And lady from North India also went there. But... Has it come out from their own, has it come out from their own to join the struggle? Yes, yes, yes. Or were they asked to participate in it? No, not us, not us.

Because the usual role of women in Indian society is quite different than to join the political struggle. No, it was, at first, when they went, they went that we don't believe the marriage of Indian type. Then that, that was the, you see, law was to come.

Then Babu said that now ladies are, this is the fight to be taken up by ladies. And then he asked ladies in their own house, own family, their own family, these four went. And then, otherwise that Gandhi's family, ladies are in jail, this family also goes to jail.

We won't obey this law. Yes. So that become quite popular, so to say, that women joined the struggle also.

When you, dishonoured lady in India also, then they are very difficult. Yes. But I read, it's a Dandi March, Dandi Kuch.

There, Gandhiji did not allow women to go to Dandi to pick up salt. But year after that, in the first batch, second batch in Saurashtra, ladies went. I saw them doing, doing salt.

My wife also went in that, taking salt, and she was punished for doing. And now she is getting pension for that. So she is also accepted as a freedom fighter.

She is freedom fighter. Yes. She is not from this Gujarat, she is near Hazargarh, her parents are there.

And I was, she found because I am freedom fighter, she wanted that I will give my life to free India. And that is why, for freeing India, we should work in village, so she went to village, and we were there. How was it at your marriage, when Gandhiji celebrated this marriage? That was not the usual way.

I mean, normally in Hindu marriages, you have to have a pundit. No, no, it was quite different. We had a, Kakasaheb Kalarkar, you know the name? Yes, yes, your teacher.

Yes, he was also, he took up some mantra and made the style in this way. And for our marriage, he was there to guide us. Guide the, you say, Guru is that, Guru, Guru, Guru.

The fire was there, we were sitting here, Kakasaheb stood there, Kasturba was nearby, I was sitting, he, because, Bapu asked my father and mother not to come, we don't, you don't travel so long, we are so young, we don't want to nestle with money, not to misuse them. So, when I and, he wrote to my father and mother that I and Bach are there, I will have, I will come by and do that marriage. Yes, yes.

And you give Asirvabhai letter. He was a very practical man, not to waste money and time for attending marriage of the children. So, Bapu sat there, and we had all the ceremony, about, about quarter of an hour, and then Bapu had a lecture.

He gave a lecture about, not less than 40 minutes. We have written the great challenge on that. I see.

You wrote it afterwards, from your memory, or Bapuji had written it? No, not at that time, but in the same evening, I scribbled and he wrote it in Hindi, because it was, he talked in Hindi, because she was Hindi, her father was Hindi. Yes, I always, the boys used to go to girls' house, but Bapu can't go there. He can't go from Vardha to Delhi, and near Haridwar.

So, my wife's father, and his friend, and his teacher, and one old lady, four, and she, she came to Vardha, and we married in Vardha Kanya Ashram, Kanya school, girls' school. I don't know how it is here, but this marriage is accepted by everybody afterwards, even if there was no Panditji doing this ceremony? No, Panditji was there. And Kaka Saheb? Kaka Saheb

was, he said that, I am now Sanyasi, so I won't have the ceremony, but I'll stay there, I'll be present there, and Purohit was of Vardha, Brahmotsava.

There is, we say seven steps, there is mantra. Yes. Those seven steps are there, that four, four vows are we taken by boys, and three vows by girls, then seven steps.

When that is done, it is called Saptamandir, Saptamandir seven. After that, the marriage is, until whole life, cannot be undone. Now it is very clear, isn't it? Not to think, even dream for other men or other women.

She won't think for other men, I can't think for other men. That is finished when the ceremony is done. No selection, feelings, no selection.

Before that I can see, I can see I am not this, not this, this is not good, that is not good. She had also seen not less than four or five. So it was not only up to the parents to choose the partner.

Not for us. Very good. Questioner 2 So she rejected three or four other men before she chose you.

I see. And what about Brahmacharya? Was it common under the Satyagrahas to give the Brahmacharya role, to live as Brahmacharya? After marriage? Krishnamurti Before marriage, yes. That is one of the four steps in Hindu life.

But I mean especially for the Satyagrahas, Ganeshji developed a new interpretation of Brahmacharya. Not only celibacy, but control of palate. Oh yes, that was... That was what he did in 1906, I see.

But in our ashram it was daily routine. Ah. So you did not give any particular vow? You have not given a special vow to live as a Brahmacharya? No, until... No, and... It is not, you see, not a vow.

But up till the age of 25, 20 I finished, I won't step, I won't think of this. So that was my Brahmacharya. And I was in ashram, I was in Vinoba, and they encouraged me that you should also become whole life unmarried.

But I said no, I... First I took vow up till 25 years. Then I went to Bapu, said what is going on in my mind, and what is the thing, and in ashram all are... I can't say... It is better that you... I can ask any girl for you, I can find any girl, but for you it is better to stay still, you know, and live full on your Brahmacharya. So I vowed that up till 32 years, I will be Brahmacharya.

After 32 years it was finished, and I was in jail. In jail I was prisoned for 6 months, and I went to solitary cell. I was made for only... no one with me, single man in single room.

So it was lonely thing, so I can have mental... I said no, that is... Now I was staying just like a monk there, and seen, but now it is only two things, that if I want to work in the society, I can't go without companion. And if I am asked to stay, then I will go with Himalayan stay, or something else. I can't stay.

Now it is your duty to have managed, tell me which girl you want. I said up till now it was all that I... not things of all... thing in my connection, they are all sisters. Whom I know, they are sisters, and whom I don't know, I can say anything about them.

Because Babu said that the boys and girls who are under me, they are brothers and sisters. They can't intermarriage, it was a strict rule there. So I don't know any girl out of Ashram girls, and all Ashram girls are my sisters.

Then he said that you are actually a prince, you are no prince, but then you are not to marry any Gujarati girl. My father and other people had some connection from Gujarat. Why no Gujarati girl? Because he said that... I said I am working in UP, and I am working in UP, so what is the harm if I get Gujarati companion there? I said.

He said no. You have friends in UP, you try there, and I will try for you in Bangalore. You may get from there.

I am trying from Bangalore for you, and you write Swamiji's Dhananjaya Purikul, and ask some friends that you are now wishing to have a marriage, any companion, you may just tell me. By letters. Then I was at Varda, at Bapuji's place, in Sevagram.

I was staying there with Bapuji. And as he said, I wrote a letter to my friend in UP, and Bapu said that I wanted one Bengali daughter for Manilal. Manilal was Rani's second son.

But I was not successful. But for you I will try in Bangalore, and I am trying there. You get Bengali.

So Bapu's idea was that India should be, you should not be, I am Gujarati, I am Bengali. United. That was the idea.

the letter went and it was not intentionally, but some friend of her daughter's teacher her teacher, went to that Galadwara ashram and he asked some youth, one youth, that if you are ready, my friend's daughter is to marry. He said that I am not ready, but Prabhudas is ready to see that. Only that occasion, that letter came to Varda.

The letter was sent to my father. I had given that letter, the answer should be given to my father and mother. My father and mother were near Amdava.

My mother read and said that I think that this is a girl that you should accept. That letter came to Varda. And my brother read it.

And then he gave it to me. I gave that letter to Bapu. And in that very letter she expressed, or her father expressed how the girl was educated and brought up.

Some introduction. No, she was Gujarati, so it was given that she learnt so much, she graduated in Hindi. Her age is big, because I was 32, but young girl is not wanted.

She was also 25 at that time. It means quite old for a girl to marry. For an Indian girl.

In those days, yes. And she wears khadi. She is a freedom fighter.

That all was told. So that is why he said, Bapu, my father, Bapu read that letter and said that yes, he gave me a signal to do this. But then Bapu's, my Bapu's friend, there was another, they violent.

And then Bapu sent me to go and see the girl. And if you like, have marriage there and then come. I won't have marriage there, I will come here.

So I went to Delhi, and she came to Delhi, and we talked two days together. And after that, it was settled, that we will be married together. So it was just up to your votes.

At that time I said, I have no money, I have no house, I have no field, I have nothing with me. And we will have to go to jail. And I am working in depressed class.

So we can't get home, house also in the city, or town. We may have to stay in that jail. If you are ready, I am ready.

She said, I am ready. Just said that. Just she said, I am ready.

Because she was working in the same line for India's freedom. No, she was thinking that she wanted to go to Bapu. But the father said, until you don't marry, I won't let you go far from the house.

You may go to jail, but it was difficult. So she said, I want a companion. When he knew that I am from Ashram and I am from Bapu's family, so he was she was also thinking that as Mirabeen is near Bapu, I will also go to stay under Mahindra.

As Mirabeen, I will also live that life. So Mirabeen was quite known in those days to Indian people. And after marriage, she lived a life like she wanted to live.

I mean, near to Bapu like Mirabeen. She was near to Bapu like Mirabeen? No, then she was with me always. But after that, one month we stayed there.

She mixed in our family. She became their family member. But what Bapu said, work and don't stay.

Ashram life, she adopted. She was a landlord girl. I was simple.

Lendless boy. So it was difficult for her. She didn't have any clothes.

Just like this, sari. It was difficult for her to work because I was working for my wife, in field also. But still, she grinded, spun, heavy work.

I did it. With water from well. She can't do it.

I did it all the time. You mean because she was quite weak at those days? No, she was not trained in that thing. But you can learn easily to catch water from the well? To dig water from the well? It was difficult to fetch.

It was difficult for her. I see. How was she involved in the freedom struggle before your marriage? What were her activities? The preachings of Gandhi went there.

When Gandhi's tour was there, and then the weekly paper of Naujivan and that she read it. And the teacher who was teaching it, he was very keen on freedom of India and how Gandhi is living and he taught her. And his father was also very good scholar of Gandhi.

Hmm. Means there was a local group who was working in Gandhi's... No, in those days every place, in Dharadwar, in Delhi, in every city there were few men who followed Gandhi. Hmm.

They were thrown away their clothes and wore that very heavy khadi. At that time khadi was not so fine, it was very heavy. Hmm.

But there was no national party or organisation who gave instructions to local groups. Local groups or people like your father-in-law, they put Gandhi's ideas into action by themselves. There was no... No, no, there were trained society, trained team.

Two or three or four friends sat together and thought that we will take up this Gandhi's work. Yes. But I did not write to Gandhiji, we founded now here a local group and give us instructions what shall we do.

No, no, no. In every province there were few big men. They followed those big men.

In UP there was Jawaharlal, there was Rajendra Babu, there was Rajiv Upalachari, there were all the people who said that we should follow Gandhi. Rajaji later became also father-in-law of Gandhiji's son. Which son was it again? Dedaji Gandhi.

Two years back I met Rajmohan Gandhi, son of Dedaji in Berlin. And he told me that you wrote a book about Rajaji. Yes, yes.

He has both his father and father important people in the history. Daughter of Rajaji is my very past friend. Always telling each other and helping each other.

She is still alive? No, she has gone now. She is in her third year. She was in twenty-eight.

Eighty-two. No, eighty-two. Eighty-three.

To whom of those days you are still in contact? To which people of the freedom movement who do you meet in these days? Nowadays? Nowadays I am I don't know the English. Anyway, I am now I am trying to write something but I remember I have many years trying to. When I go to I see people.

That's what I see people. I don't go by myself to anyone. But occasionally the people come to you and When they come, they see me.

We have been together in the early years to see each other. Yesterday, the day before yesterday there was a meeting. You had come in that evening? No.

No, I just returned yesterday from D.U. So I was not here the day before yesterday. There was a meeting of the called Freedom Fighters? These two ladies who came here. These two ladies who you said you were also with Mirabelle.

My sister's husband he was a lecturer. He was a minister in Rajkot and Bombay. He was doing political work.

He and other people we met and we saw each other and we remember this work for the country. And how do you see the situation of Gandhian activities nowadays in India? Oh, one minute. It is just finished again.

Let me bring another cassette. Thank you.