

INSIGHTS into EDITORIAL

GENERAL STUDIES - I

1. The Gandhis, Mandelas and Kings of today

Introduction:

- We cannot celebrate Mahatma Gandhi today nor Nelson Mandela nor Martin Luther King Jr. without inviting their immediate and stern reprimand.
- All three would say, each a bit differently from the other: 'If you are gathered to celebrate us, stop right here. If you are gathered to think with us, then listen.
- Not to us or to those who speak in our names but to your consciences, for that is all we did.
- We did look back to our heroes and heroines, we did celebrate their anniversaries, but only in order to look more clearly at the world around us and into the future that beckoned.
- India is a free country today, the colonised world is gone. South Africa's sharp, bruising chains of apartheid iron have snapped.
- The U.S., with its **Civil Rights Act** in place, has made **slavery a thing of the disreputable past**.
- It has gone on to elect a distinguished President, Barack Obama, from among people who did not, until very recently, even have the right to ride in a bus on a seat of their choice. But are you Indians, South Africans, Americans a happy and contented people?'
- They would ask us this question in anxiety and in pain. We know the answer.

Torture or Untouchability?

- Albert Lutuli's and Mandela's South Africa has signed and ratified without any objections or reservations the **United Nations Convention Against Torture**.
- Abraham Lincoln's and Martin Luther King Jr.'s U.S. has done so with reservations.
- Rabindranath Tagore's and Gandhi's India has signed but has not ratified the Convention Against Torture.
- What would those two men have had to say about this? Is something about torture more valuable to a state than its outright abolition?
- George Floyd's dying words, "I can't breathe", rival Martin Luther King Jr.'s living words, "I have a dream".
- That Floyd's words were uttered when the world was breathing through masks, inhaling with fear, expiring in despair has given us a chilling picture of the human origins of the crisis that we have brought upon ourselves.

The habitual greed of a civilisation: Victims are innocent human beings, poor and marginalised:

- India, South Africa, the U.S., and the whole world are in the **grip of the vicious virus** that goes by the name of COVID-19 but are in reality in **the grip of the gluttony of a civilisation** that is disembowelling the earth of its resources and is hunting down the earth's life forms **to gratify its craving for commercial profit**.
- There is a **wild animal market in every city and town** and, more significant than that, within each of us who are **not among the poor**, in the shape of a callous disregard of life and the sanctity of due proportion.
- The 'crown' of the novel coronavirus microbe is not different either in its human origins nor its inhuman effect from the giant plumes that rose over the embers at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.