

8 November, 2017

Shrimad Rajchandraji and Gandhiji

“I must say that no one else has ever made on me the impression that Raychandbhai did. His words went straight home to me... In my moments of spiritual crisis, he was my refuge.”

These are the words penned by Mahatma Gandhi, the most influential figure India has produced in generations, in His autobiography – on his guiding light, Shrimad Rajchandraji.

Gandhiji met Shrimadji for the first time in Mumbai, upon his return from England as a barrister in 1891 and instantly took to His liking. Subsequent meetings ensued in the two years that Gandhiji spent in Mumbai. As the association grew, his respect for Shrimadji grew in leaps and bounds. Even after Gandhiji moved to South Africa, the meetings continued, though not in person, but through correspondence. This close association contributed a great deal in moulding Gandhiji’s character. In fact, he attributes his strong foundation of truth, non-violence and self-improvement, to Shrimadji.

Shrimadji’s letters and compositions were Gandhiji’s dear companions. He contemplated upon them time and time again. Gandhiji would write about Shrimadji, speak about Him in speeches and discuss Him with close associates. His words are windows to a heart overflowing with devotion for Shrimadji. He continued to be deeply inspired by his bond with Shrimadji and His spiritual works. The bond between Shrimadji and Gandhiji initiated a brilliant new chapter, not only in their own lives, but in the cultural, political and spiritual history of the nation and the world. Their legacies continue to offer new paradigms to global peace and human progress.

Fascinating Facts Of Shrimadji’s Impact on Gandhiji

Gandhiji dedicated an entire chapter to Shrimadji entitled ‘Raychandbhai’ in his autobiography ‘The Story of My Experiments with Truth.’ He also mentions Shrimadji in the chapters, ‘Religious Ferment’, ‘Comparative Study of Religions’ and ‘Brahmacharya’.

When Gandhiji was sent to London to put forward the plight of the Indians in South Africa, he carried some letters that Shrimadji had written to him as well as an English translation of ‘Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra’ – Shrimadji’s philosophical magnum opus, translated by Gandhiji himself.

Shrimadji's distinctive composition, 'Apurva Avsar Evo Kyare Aavshe?' was one of Gandhiji's favourites. It was included in the 'Ashram Bhajanavali' – a collection of devotional songs sung at daily prayer meetings. Gandhiji often recited Shrimadji's poem 'Nirkhine Nav Yauvana' to strengthen his belief in celibacy.

Gandhiji prepared an article entitled, 'Some Recollections of Raychandbhai', in which he extensively extolled Shrimadji. He wrote this article while he was jailed in Yerwada, Pune.



HEARTFELT TRIBUTES BY GANDHIJI

"Such was the man who captivated my heart in religious matters as no other man has till now."
Mahatma Gandhi
- Modern Review, June 1930

"The more I consider His life and His writings, the more I consider Him to have been the best Indian of His times."
Mahatma Gandhi
- Letter to HSL Polak, April 26 1909

"I have often declared that I have learnt, and learnt much, from the lives of many persons. But it is from the Kavishri's (Shrimadji's) life that I have learnt the most. It was from His life that I understood the way of compassion."
Mahatma Gandhi
- Speech at Ahmedabad, November 1921

"We are all worldly people whereas Shrimad was not of this world. We will have to take many births whereas for Shrimad perhaps one birth is sufficient. We will perhaps be running away from liberation whereas Shrimad was advancing towards liberation at a very fast pace."
Mahatma Gandhi
- Some Recollections of Raychandbhai. An article written by Mahatma Gandhi in Yerwada Central Jail, Pune

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