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CELEBRATING 68th INDEPENDENCE DAY

INDIA GROWING STRONGER & MORE PROSPEROUS



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EK THA VEER

Let's pay a befitting tribute to Virchand Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary Aug 25 for his services to country, mankind and community.

By Pankaz
Chandmal Hingarh

Well as the title conveys, we are here to remember a brave heroic legend. A veer who dauntlessly displayed his patriotism for mother India on September 25, 1893 at historic World Parliament of Religions in Chicago by defending Indian culture & Hinduism where he was a delegate to represent Jainism. Hon'ble PM of India Shree Narendrabhai Modi had referred to this Veer in his address to the Indian Diaspora across US & Canada when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. He was none other than Virchand Raghavji Gandhi.

Flash Back: In 19th century colonial India, which was under British raj things were quite difficult. Amidst all the unrest, in 1893, a World's Fair Exposition was planned and organized in Chicago. The World's Congress of Religions was the largest of the congresses held in conjunction with the Exposition.

This event was birth of formal interreligious dialogue. Each religion's highest spiritual masters were invited to represent their religion. To represent Jainism, highest authority of Jains, Munishree Atmaramji alias Acharyashree Vijayanandsuriji was invited and appointed as a member of Advisory Council of the Parliament of the Religions. As he couldn't attend the same, he trained and deputed his disciple Shree Virchand Raghavji Gandhi.

Brief Background of Virchand Gandhi (VRG): By then Virchand Gandhi had mastered 14 languages and fundamentals of all major world religions. He was born in an affluent Jain Family in 'Kashmir of Saurashtra', Mahuva. Before his birth his mother had seen an auspicious dream. Virchand as a brother used to help Mahatma Gandhi in understanding Indian Law by telling different stories of lawyers and stalwarts. As first honorary secretary of Jain Association of India he had already proved his unique ability and service for community by successfully abolishing pilgrim tax from Palitana's holy pilgrimage and getting tallow factory closed from Shree Sammed Shikharji holy teerth which was run by an English man

Boddam.

Now, coming back to to 1893's event. The World's Parliament of Religions, was held on the shore of Lake Michigan, Chicago. It was dominated by English speaking Christian representatives, who delivered 153 of 194 speeches. Opportunity for the leaders from other religious traditions was limited, although significant. Twelve speakers represented Buddhism, 11 Judaism, 8 Hinduism, 2 Islam, 2 Parsi, 2 Shintoism, 2 Confucianism, 1 Taoism and 1 Jainism. There were many Christian speakers who appreciated the oriental religions and also the depth to which they have reached.

Virchand Gandhi's speech on the 'history and the tenets of the Jaina' was admired. But in between derogatory remarks on Indian culture and Hinduism made by Rev. George F. Pentecost and others were too much for a true patriot like Virchand Gandhi. He retaliated to every attack made on Indian culture and Hinduism before he got back with his presentation. His patriotic speech echoed true spirit and culture of India.

Theosophical Society co-founder Henry Steel Olcott had mentioned in his authentic book 'Old Diary Leaves' that Vivekananda, VR Gandhi, Dharmapala had captivated all at the parliament.

CAPTIVATING 535 SPEECHES IN WEST:

VRG delivered 535 lectures mainly in different parts of USA and Europe and was nationally and internationally felicitated with many medals and widely covered in leading western newspapers. He spoke on a plethora of subjects like Indian international trade system, Indian economic and industrial outlook, real estate, ancient history of Indian civilization, science of eating, yoga, concentration, hypnotism, astral vision and astral body, occultism, vegetarianism & fundamentals of world religions. He was admired most for practicing universal brotherhood.

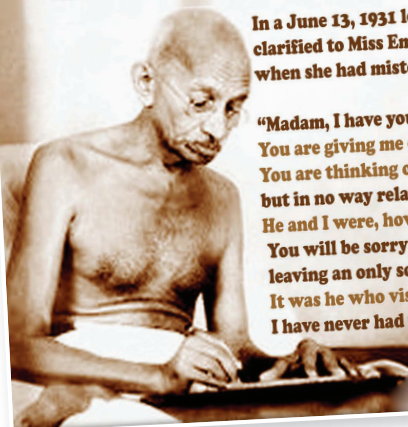
He died at age of 37 on 7th August, 1901. From three heroes of 1893's event, today Shree Swami Vivekanandji & Shree Dharampalji's contributions are duly recognized in India and Srilanka. It's appreciable. Now it's time to also duly recognize hero Virchand

Gandhi, his services for country, mankind and community. This 25th August, 2014 is 150th Birth Anniversary of this Indian legend. Let's pay homage to such a legend.

(The author is credited with maximum modern researches on Virchand Gandhi.)

Mahatma Gandhi & Virchand Gandhi were Friends and had lived together for some time.

Virchand Gandhi as a brother used to help Mahatma Gandhi in understanding Study of Indian Law by telling him different Stories of Vakils and Stalwarts (Ref : Mahatma Gandhi's Autobiography)



In a June 13, 1931 letter, Mahatma Gandhi clarified to Miss Emelia Mac Bean of Chicago when she had mistook him as Virchand R Gandhi,

"Madam, I have your letter for which I thank you. You are giving me credit of which I am wholly undeserving. You are thinking of another Mr. Gandhi my name-sake but in no way related to me. He and I were, however, friends and lived together for some time. You will be sorry to hear that he died many years ago, leaving an only son. It was he who visited America and made many friends. I have never had the privilege of visiting your continent."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Creation: Pankaz Chandmal Hingarh

Virchand Raghavji Gandhi a 19th Century Benevolent Indian

1. A dauntless patriot who defended Hinduism, Indian Culture, represented Jainism in 1893's Parliament of World Religions in Chicago on 11th, 25th & 27th September, 1893 & received round of applause on 25th Sept. 1893 (Ref: Richard Hughes Seager 1896) & on 27th Sept. 1893 (Ref: Rev. J.H. Barrows Book)

2. An early Indian Real Estate Analyst who participated and delivered interesting speech on 25th Oct. 1893 in WORLD REAL ESTATE CONGRESS in Chicago, on Land System of India & existing LAWS & CONDITIONS affecting the ownership & transfer of land in India.

3. An early Indian Economist who as sole indian delegate participated in world's 3rd historic conference International Congress of Commerce by Philadelphia Commercial Museum and lectured on 'TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND INDIA', 'Parcel Post & Commercial Education' on 19th & 20th Oct. 1899

4. A Reformer who established in Chicago 'Society for the Education of Women in India'

5. A philanthropist who collected and sent Rs 40,000 and a shipload of grains from the USA to India during the worst famine of 1896-97

6. A virtuous person who played instrumental role in settling Shree Palitana Pilgrim Tax Dispute & winning Shree Sammed Shikhar's Piggery case

7. Delivered 535 speeches in USA and Europe on Yoga, Occult Science, World Religions, Concentration, Science of Eating, Astral Vision, Astral Body, etc

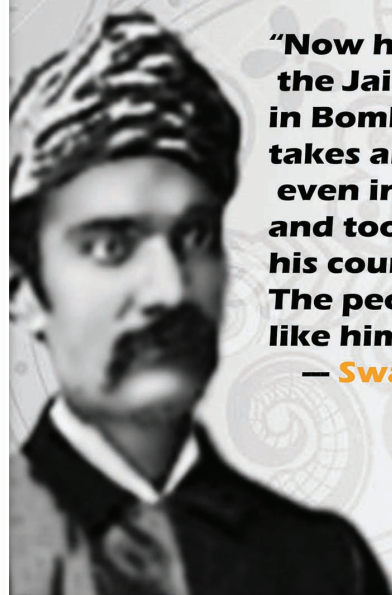


Research & Creation : Pankaz Chandmal Hingarh & Chandresh Dhiraj Gandhi

In 1894 from Chicago in a letter to Haridas Desai Swami Vivekananda mentioned about Virchand R Gandhi

"Now here is Virchand Gandhi, the Jain whom you knew well in Bombay. This man never takes anything but mere vegetables even in this terribly cold climate and tooth and nail tries to defend his countrymen and the religion. The people of this country like him very well. ..."

— Swami Vivekananda



Creation: Pankaz Chandmal Hingarh