

SELECTED THOUGHTS

# RAJIV GANDHI



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# RAJIV GANDHI (1944-1991)

- 20 August 1944 - Born in Bombay
- 1960- Passed Senior Cambridge Examination from Doon School, Dehradun.
- 1962 - Left for U.K. for higher studies.
- 1963 - Joined Trinity College, Cambridge to study Mechanical Engineering.
- 1965 - Met Sonia Maino, an Italian, studying at language teaching school, Cambridge.
- 28 February 1968- Married Sonia Maino
- May 1968- Joined Indian Airlines as a pilot.
- 11 May 1981- Joined politics - enrolled himself as a primary member of the Congress (I).
- 15 June 1981 - Got elected from Amethi Lok Sabha Constituency.
- 2 February 1983 - Appointed as Congress General Secretary.
- 31 October 1984 - His mother, Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, was assassinated. Was sworn in as Prime Minister.
- November 1984 - Congress party returned to power with massive mandate with Rajiv Gandhi as its leader.

## SELECTED THOUGHTS

# Rajiv Gandhi

*Compiled by*

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are happy to bring to our readers another new series, "Selected Thoughts". We have many personalities who contributed their mite to the reconstruction of India. It is worth noting their thoughts on various issues that are confronting India and the world. From their thoughts we will know their vision of India. It is for the present and future generations to realise the dreams of our departed national leaders.

We hope this series will be welcomed by the readers as well as our ongoing series "Quotable Quotes".

Dr. S. S. Shashi  
Director  
Publications Division

## **Apartheid**

Apartheid is a blot on our civilisation. It is a crime against humanity. It has become a structure of institutionalised terror, sustained by racist domination and economic exploitation.

To temporize with apartheid is to compromise with human decency.

The ending of apartheid is not merely the restoration of human rights and human dignity to the people of South Africa, but is, in fact, the restoration of human rights and human dignity to all of humanity.

## **Communal Harmony**

Communalism is perhaps the biggest danger that is afflicting our country today and we must rid the country of this. We must be united in fighting this menace.

We have to build a country that Gandhiji and Panditji dreamed of, that Indiraji set out to build, where there is communal harmony, where we live as brothers and sisters, where we can hold our heads high—a country which makes us proud to be a member of the comity of nations.

The battle against communalism has to be fought primarily, in the minds of our people.

## **Children**

A child must be taught to love its family, its country, and also to love the whole world and look upon it as one family.

It is for us parents to see that the child grows up in a world of love and not in a world of hate.

## **Democracy**

A democracy needs a high level of debate.

Our democracy is strong. It is very healthy and progressing rapidly. But that does not mean we can stop and rest. If democracy is to survive, if it is to be preserved, we have to defend it every day, every minute of every day. We have to protect and nurture it.

Our experience convinces us that democracy in India is durable and effective.

Democracy demands a system of checks and balances which operate first of all, in the mind, in self-imposed discipline, in moral values and ethical principles, in norms and conventions,

in professional standards and professional rectitude.

No institution of democracy is perfect, there is none which does not contain room for improvement.

### **Development**

The financial and technological dimension cannot obscure the essential human context of development. The test of development is the making of a better individual.

We must find the resources for development from within. If we have to stand independent and proud, it

cannot be by taking an easy route; it cannot be by luxury and ease; it can only be by blood, sweat and tears; it can only be by sacrifice.

We have too often related development with economic development and missed the broader aspects of culture of our society and what truly constitutes development.

There is no contradiction between scientific or modern development and the development of the spiritual element in the human being. We need economic development combined with spiritual development.

## **Education**

Education permeates every aspect of life. It must be such that it brings the best out of our past, takes the best of the present, but keeps in mind the future direction that we want to give the country in terms of political, economic and cultural development.

Education should be such that it builds an inner strength of our people.

The objectives of education basically are freedom of the individual, a fulfilment in life, equality among all our people, excellence of each individual

and collective self-reliance, and perhaps most of all national cohesion.

Education, after all, is basically a communication method, for communicating ways of thinking, communicating perspectives, communicating values from one generation to the next, and preparing the next generation to face the challenges that it will be called upon to undertake.

Education is not finished when we leave school or college. It is a process which continues throughout life.

Education is perhaps the one most

important **national** activity. It is the backbone of any progress that the country can make.

Education cannot be in islands, or in pockets. It cannot be claimed to be successful if we have a few sharp peaks among our people. What we really need is to raise the level of the mass of our society.

### **Environment**

We must harmonise different environmental disciplines. What we need is harmony between developmental issues and environmental matters.



The awareness of nature must be one of the most essential inputs in our development effort. If development is isolated from ecology, from the environment, then development itself suffers.

Man, with modern technology at his command, has for the first time the power to destroy the environment around him and create a situation from which he will not be able to come out, no matter how technologically advanced he may be.

Conservation is not a national task

alone. Even as peace is indivisible, so is the world environment.

There is no dichotomy between protecting the environment and development. They go hand in hand.

In planting a tree, we express gratitude to nature. We give back a little bit from what we have taken so much. It is an expression of love, of concern, for one's fellow beings, for life on earth.

All other environmental dangers pale in comparison to the ever accumulating stock piles of nuclear weapons.

We need a global effort to bring within

the easy reach of all, developing and developed, the technologies that exist and are yet to be developed to combat pollution and environmental degradation.

### **Free Press**

A free press is an imperative for a democracy; it is essential for a country like India if we are to develop and become stronger.

The profession of journalism is an exciting profession, it is a demanding profession and I believe it is a satisfying profession.

A free press is integral to a democratic society. We cannot imagine a true democracy functioning with a gagged or suppressed press.

In India we want a free press; we want a press that is objective, that criticises, that is upfront, but would also like to see the press looking at the real issues that the country is facing.

The freedom of press, for us, is an article of faith, sanctified by our Constitution, validated by our freedom, and indispensable to our future as nation.

## **Non-Alignment**

Non-Alignment is a refusal to be drawn into the barren rivalries and dangerous confrontations of others. It is an affirmation of the need for self-confident cooperation among all countries.

Non-Alignment is, in essence, the assertion of our right as independent countries to make up our minds on international issues free from the preoccupations and prejudices of the power blocs.

The Non-Aligned Movement has shown the world the alternative to disastrous confrontation and destructive rivalry.

Non-Alignment matters to the world because we are the conscience keepers of humanity. We are the voice of sanity. We are the custodians of freedom and human dignity.

## **Non-Violence**

Our legacy from Gandhiji, from Panditji, from Indiraji, the legacy from the freedom movement and the Constitution is one of the non-violence. The

legacy enjoins upon us to protect the disadvantaged and weaker sections and search for peace and development.

We have built our nation on the basic philosophy of Gandhiji: of non-violence, of truth, of one humanity. We have translated this into our foreign policy of non-alignment.

We need a new vision of humanity, a vision based on truth and non-violence, a vision that will nourish life in all its myriad beautiful forms.

If you are looking for a revolution,

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there is a revolution available today and that revolution is **ahimsa**, in one word.

### **Nuclear Disarmament**

Our vision is of a world which forswears nuclear weapons and the doctrines that go with such weaponry, a world which believes instead in non-violence and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

If poverty has to be removed and if weaker nations have to progress, then it is essential to have nuclear disarmament.

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India

There is only one answer to the menace of nuclear war and that is to dismantle all nuclear weapons, terminating the nuclear arms race on earth and preventing a nuclear arms race in space.

We must remove the threat of thermonuclear war wiping out, in a wink of history, life as we know it from our common planet. All nuclear weapons must be banned.

### **Science and Technology**

We shall develop the technologies of the future, where we need new technology, we will get it. Where there is inefficiency, it will be weeded out.

Science is a worldwide discipline, not confined by political boundaries or by any narrow walls. It cuts across all such boundaries.

We have to go to the frontiers of science to benefit our people, yet that must be translated into what is socially meaningful, what is socially relevant what can reach out to the millions of our people.

Science has no political boundaries. It flows across all boundaries. Ideas, concepts and the consequences of various scientific endeavours are a

common heritage for all humanity and it is therefore, for our scientists not to be cocooned in the knowledge that is available only within certain boundaries.

We should not be satisfied with second rate technologies, second rate development. We must go to the front areas.

If India is to get out of its poverty to become a developed country, it can only do so by developing science and technology.

Our task in India is to end poverty and

the challenge to our scientists is, how modern scientific and technological knowledge can be brought to bear on the task of removing poverty.

When we talk of technology, it is not just a question of getting a computer here or a very highly sophisticated piece of equipment. It is how that equipment is used for the benefit of the everyday life of the average individual.

We can only afford to keep our doors and windows open to the winds of technological change if our private industry works towards India

becoming a world leader in adapting, upgrading and generating new technology.

### **Secularism**

We mean by secularism that the state in India does not interfere in the religious practices of its citizens, nor does it encourage the mixing of religion with politics. The State has no religion. At the same time, our State respects the religious sensibilities of our people.

Secularism for us is the pursuit of truth in the conviction that truth will triumph.

India and secularism must remain synonymous to assure the glory of our civilisation and the future of our country.

### **Socialism**

Socialism in India is not a dogma. It is responsive to changing circumstances.... The focus of our socialism is the uplift of the poor, succour to the weak, justice to the oppressed and balanced regional development.

Our socialism is indigenous to our country, a response to our needs, to our aspirations, to our freedom movement.

## **Sports**

Our effort is to see that sports become a means for shaping the character of our youth. Through sports they must learn to excel as individuals. They must also learn to play together as a team.

We must see that sports are for sports sake and not for winning or losing.

Our endeavour should be to build healthy bodies through sports and make ourselves fitness-conscious.

## **Unity and National Integration**

National integration cannot be

brought about just by putting it in the Constitution. It is something that each one of us has to build into the social system of the country.

Unity does not mean uniformity. It does not mean obliteration of differences, of identities. It means the independent development of each of our cultural systems within an integrated whole for the development of India.

It is imperative that we stop looking at each other in this world as Black, Brown, Yellow and White, and we start looking at each other as just



people, brothers and sisters, not different from each other.

We have to ensure that casteism is completely eliminated from our politics. To achieve this, we have to stand united.

National integration also means a struggle against social disparities and disabilities.

### **Youth**

We have full faith in the youth of India. The youth of India have demonstrated their wisdom, their maturity in Panchayat elections, local body elections,

and we feel that they are now ready to participate fully in the democratic process.

It has been said many a time that the future of India lies in the hands of its youth. But it is more important to say this today because over half of our population is below forty years of age.

The spirit which permeated the battle for freedom, the principles of Gandhiji should once again be propagated among the present generation.

### **Women**

When the women of India develop

their full potential, the country itself will realise its full potential.

Women folk transmit our culture from one generation to the next. They hand over the torch. This is the strength of our country today.

As a group, women are perhaps the largest under privileged group in the world.

A society's progress can really be judged by how well half our society progresses. And if they are to progress fast, half the talent, half the energy cannot be ignored.

31 December 1984 - Was sworn in as PM for the second time.

24 July 1985 - Signed a memorandum of settlement on Punjab issue.

15 August 1985 - Signed a memorandum of settlement on the Assam problem.

15 December 1985 - Received the Beyond War Award from Beyond War Foundation.

4 August 1986 - Participated in Commonwealth Summit, London.

8 August 1986 - Participated in Six nation Summit on Peace and Disarmament, Mexico.

1 September 1986 - Participated in Eighth Non-Aligned Summit, Harare.

10 September 1986 - Received Nicaragua's highest award "Augusto Caesar Sandina Order"

29 July 1987 - Signed an agreement with Sri Lanka

November 1989 - Rajiv Gandhi elected as leader of opposition.

21 May 1991 - Killed in a bomb explosion while electioneering at Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu.

24 May 1991 - Last journey - mortal remains consigned to flames.

17 June 1991 - Bharat Ratna, the highest honour of the country conferred posthumously.

6 July 1991 - Sonia Gandhi received the award.

## Quotable Quotes Series

1. Mahatma Gandhi
2. Swami Vivekananda
3. Sri Aurobindo
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