



**Birth of Satyagraha, September 11, 1906  
9/11  
A Revelation A Century Apart**

Address by

**Prof. Sayed Hamid\***

**I**t is a matter of privilege and great pleasure that I am invited for this occasion by this assembly. Please don't entertain any such idea that I am also involved in similar persuites as you are and for which you are inspired. I am engaged in learning and teaching, reading and writing. I am in full agreement with the movement you have initiated and in which all of you are participating with such enthusiasm.

**D**ifference of opinion among human beings is natural. There is nothing unnatural about one holding a different point of view than the other. Similarly, there ought to be differences among nations and countries. A nation may hold and ought to hold different views on life and affairs. However, if the path of resolving difference of opinions is violent, then humanity can not progress. Resolution of differences lies only in the ways and methods of nonviolence, in presenting one's position fullest while following the ideals and principles of the law of truth. There is no other way than this for those who wish to resolve conflicts of views, opinions or interests; for, nothing but truth is the first and the final reality.

**T**he word "Haq" (right) has common usage among our people. It has many meanings. One of the meanings is what we call 'right'. People often proclaim "We will not rest until we get our rights". "Rights" are for which people often fight for. The other meaning of the term "Haq" is righteousness, justice and truth ("nyaya", "insaf", "satya"....)

I invite the indulgence of your imagination. Just imagine what can happen if tremors are caused to this immensely vast canopy called the universe, the

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\* Prof. Sayed Hamid is a well respected social and educational reformer, educationalist, administrator and intellectual. His guidance is sort in the issues of the community, his words carry weight. Former Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University and Chairman, Jamia Hamdard Education Society.

cosmos, the “Brahmand”. It is sustained by the Law of Truth, which is righteousness, “nyaya”, “insaf”, or “dharma”. The canopy that shelters and protects us would suffer upheavals no sooner truth and righteousness are compromised.

**G**reat teachings sermonize that do not call the Time bad. Don’t curse the course of time for being bad or worst, for time in itself is neither bad nor good. It is independent of either. Shri Rajiv Vora has presented a great evidence for this. Our minds are possessed by the tragic event of 2001, which is known as Nine Eleven and after which the global balance has been disturbed. He reminds us that on the same date in 1906 Mahatma Gandhi had laid the foundation of Satyagraha in South Africa. He employed this method of suffering, sacrifice, love and valor and successfully proved the efficacy of it. Gandhiji came back to India equipped with Satyagraha and with this one weapon he humbled the mightiest imperial power of the time and forced them to quit India. The path of Satyagraha is of peace and harmony. Philosophy of ‘ahinsa’ or non-violence existed even earlier. But it is Mahatma Gandhi who put it into practice in the totality of life. The great Russian literary figure, Tolstoy, has beautifully discussed this.

**I** am much impressed by the fact that among those of you who took oath of Shanti Sainik today, and whom the assembly so honoured Muslims are in large number; for, Muslims are there in the petty politics, but they have stayed away from social service. Now that they have now come forward for social service, you will see that the things will not remain the same. I congratulate for this Mr. Vora and his colleagues. This is a historical step. He tells us that it is the teachings of your religion, how long will you keep away from social service.

**S**o far as the advent of fashionable new ideas, bent of mind and mental attitudes are concerned, which are quite different and remote from our culture and civilization and, which Rajiv Vora explained, – it is shocking and a matter of deep worry and concern that India, whose civilization is so ancient and so

great should abandon so easily its culture and traditions. I fail to understand why our country has so suddenly come under the influence of the west. I often tell my friends that had it been some neo-rich nation, someone like the USA, one can understand. For, they have no such ancient traditions and therefore nothing to restrain them. But how come India with such ancient traditions and culture lapped up all this without any checks and reconciled with it is incomprehensible; and, there is none to point even a finger at this. There is an urgency to pay our attention to an issue of such a grave nature.

Satyagraha, as it has been pointed out in your literature, is the bad rock; it is an all encompassing programme. Only truth protects and shelters all the humanitarian attributes and it is an obligation for us to advance them. You have also indicated that in the very Birth of Satyagraha in 1906 in Johannesburg, South Africa, Muslims were in the forefront among Mahatma Gandhi's companions and supporters. You have also mentioned some of the names of those on the frontline in the Satyagraha movement against the colonial repression in South Africa. They were the people who got engaged and active with Mahatma Gandhi in the service of the community and of human dignity. Gandhiji returned to India while they stayed back. The spirit of service of the society so pronounced at that time dissipated amongst us as the time passed.

**Let** me draw your attention to something Maulana Anzar Shah has had to say. For a religious scholar so speak up in favour of Communists definitely holds weight. I too have felt over the time and entertained the view, -- prior to my meeting with Shri Rajiv Vora – that communists have become India's moral voice; that they have become conscience of the nation. Wherever there was injustice, atrocities on the poor or trampling over their rights; or, wherever the proletariat are exploited and repressed; and in case of religious extremism, it is always the leftists who spoke up against it and protested. Though Maulana Anzar Shah talked of communists within a certain context, I do feel that somehow they have acquired the honour of being a moral voice of the nation.

Now, let us see what the USA did to Iraq and Afghanistan; how it came into Iraq. It might have come to your knowledge that how first of all, to begin with, an American ambassador encouraged, in fact insinuated Iraq --Saddam Hussain-- into invading Kuwait. Documentary evidence is there to substantiate this. Then the USA spread the rumour all over the world that Iraq was in possession of the weapons of mass destruction and therefore it can destroy the world. This was denied repeatedly. Only the other day the US Defence Secretary Collin Powell's statement was in the Press. He had said that he will go with the scar that he committed the mistake by declaring that Iraq possessed weapons which will destroy the entire world. Powell makes a confession of a sort by further stating that he was misled on account of wrong information given out to him by the American Intelligence. What a confession indeed! Your game and posture, other's death dance! You pulverised a whole nation just because someone gave you false information! What sort of justice is this? What manner is this?

Here, therefore there is a question I would like to pose before Mr. Vora and his colleagues. There is no need to answer it now. Answer it some other time. When the USA decided to attack Iraq, thousands of American people came out on the streets in protest against it. People were not supportive of their government's decision. All over the USA and Europe, including in cities like Washington and London, people came out on the streets in hundreds of thousands. However, in spite of the fact that their protests were peaceful and their conduct in keeping with the certain spirit of Satyagraha – without of course the spirit of sacrifice and martyrdom - the assembly of all the nation, the entire world warned that it was unjust and uncalled for step, but none could stop the US from attacking Iraq. What is the cure for this? It seems America's Mr. George Bush thinks himself entitled to arbitrary rights and as if he is the all powerful self-governing unchallenged ruler of the world. As if they hold all the nations of the world by their leash. Where is the remedy for this? I can not comprehend this. There are people who would speak up, some would complain and some would petition that the world is being subjected to atrocities. What next, and to what end? Is it that the enormous might of the

weapons will suppress the voice of truth and justice? Such is the weight and gravity of the matter that it demands our utmost serious consideration.

On this occasion I wish also to draw your attention to what is going on in the name of globalization. Millions of artisans will be rendered jobless. They will lose their wherewithal, and yet our country does not think it necessary to be worried about this serious matter. These are our people, it is their untiring toil, it is their sweat and blood that creates and considerably adds into nation's economy and wealth. They are the back bone, the pillars of our nation's prosperity. And yet no one has the slightest concern and consideration for their miserable plight. The great poet Iqbal said;

*Dast Daulat aafari ko muzaad u milti rahi  
Ahale sarwat jaise dete hai garibo ko jakat*

*Creator of wealth is so compensated,  
as if it is a dole to the destitute.*

Our rulers have no heart for the hands that bring prosperity to the nation. Let me say that even our social civil society organizations are also not thoughtful and considerate about them as much as they ought to be. Catastroph is in the sight but no one is worried, about averting it much less doing anything.

I do not wish to say anything more than this.

Once more I congratulate you, all those who have pledged to become messengers of peace and non-violence, Shanti Sainiks; to Mr. Vora and his colleagues who have taken up a cause in which you have no vested interest, neither it brings any name and fame nor is it guided by any political motives much less by any hunger for power, comfort or position. You have come forward for a true service of the society. I pray to God almighty for your success and that with His blessings may your organization achieve these lofty goals you have set for yourselves.

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TANSLATED BY Dr. Niru Vora and Rajiv Vora From original speech in Hindustani

