



## Hind Swaraj and Other Writings

*Mahatma Gandhi, John Dunn, Geoffrey Hawthorn, Anthony J. Parel (Editor)*

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Hind Swaraj is Mahatma Gandhi's fundamental work, and a key to the understanding both of his life and thought, and South Asian politics in the twentieth century. This volume presents for the first time the original 1910 edition of this work, including Gandhi's Preface and Foreword, not found in other editions. This is the first fully annotated edition of the work, and the volume also includes Gandhi's correspondence with Tolstoy, Nehru and others. Anthony Parel's introduction sets the work in its historical and intellectual contexts. Short bibliographical notes on prominent figures mentioned in the text and a chronology of important events are also included as aids to the reader.

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## From Reader Review Hind Swaraj and Other Writings for online ebook

### ZaRi says

"I believe that the civilization India evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors, Rome went, Greece shared the same fate; the might of the Pharaohs was broken; Japan has become Westernized; of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation. The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this India remains immovable and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty: it is the sheet-anchor of our hope. Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct"."

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### Abhishek Sayam says

Originally written in Gujarati, Gandhi himself translated it into English as the Gujarati version got banned in India. Basically, it's a conversation between Gandhi and his interlocutor or a common man. It makes us understand the ideology of Gandhi. Why he had so much faith in non violence? Why he emphasized self reliance? why he opposed modernization? and many such questions get answered in this book. "A must read to understand Gandhi, his thought, his thinking."

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### Judith says

I read this book because it was required reading for a class. I expected it to be long and tedious and hard to get through, but it surprisingly wasn't. The dialogue format of the book made the reading actually enjoyable, and I learned a lot about Gandhi's position and role of that time period. While I didn't completely agree with him in all of his views, his views were very interesting.

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### Satish Bagal says

"Hind Swaraj" constitutes seminal and most basic writing of Mahatma Gandhi. And yet there are important issues with this book that need to be understood in the context of Gandhi's practical life. It appears, and please mark my words, there is not enough acknowledgement that Gandhi went on changing with times. Especially after Gandhi wrote "The Hind Swaraj" and came back to India he continually evolved in response to his circumstances and challenges he faced.

Evolution of Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most fascinating things that one needs to understand. It is only in the dynamics of the evolution of Mahatma Gandhi (which he fully acknowledged) that "Hind Swaraj" makes sense.

I have written a blog entitled "Mahatma Gandhi and The Hind Swaraj" that throws some light on how he evolved and continued to infuse new meaning to "The Hind Swaraj". Pl read the blog on the following link.

<http://satish-bagal.blogspot.in/2012/...>

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Satish Bagal

### **Rajen Shah says**

A perfect way to introduce yourself to Gandhi's vision, "Swaraj" is a term he coined for "self-rule." Although this is a book that pleads with his contemporaries, it should resonate with many. He is pleading for the individual to rule his or her self, before demanding a thing from his or her oppressor. With this, a society should work beautifully, from the bottom up. I don't remember if he says anything like this in the book, but it's helpful to read this with the understanding that Gandhi was aware of the perceived naivety of his goal. This is why he said, "It may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore not worth a single thought... Let India live for the true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it."

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### **J.H. Everett says**

Gandhi's position on passive resistance and his place politically in history came about because of this document. I was amazed that his clarity of thought was such that he wrote the entire document, without any major revision! What a mind.

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### **Belinda says**

A very well written manifesto, though I disagree with many of his main points.  
Spent way too much time studying this book, if I never have to read it again it will be a blessing.

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### **Hrishikesh says**

Mixed feelings, and none of which confirm with popular perceptions.

On one hand, I've been a fan of Gandhism (before it become fashionable to be so). What strikes me as being the most relevant is Gandhiji's insistence on improving and cleansing the self - premonition tells me that once the inner world is sorted, the outer world can go take a hike. Gandhiji's nuanced approach to several

(most?) issues, emphasis on patience and search for (largely spiritual) peace resonate very strongly with my own (premature, half-baked) beliefs.

At the same time, I do find Gandhiji to be rigid while addressing several issues - particularly those relating to science. A lot of these ideas will not find any relevance in today's India. For instance, Gandhiji's views on the railways or on the medical profession seem to be an over-simplification.

Perhaps, I myself am at fault for reading the book too critically - "reading to respond, not to absorb". But ultimately, mixed sentiments. Some parts I agree with, some I disagree with - and I am not sure if Gandhiji himself would have been in support of the disagreement.

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### **Max Ritter says**

Hind Swaraj is the writing that helped make Gandhi famous, as he created a sort of Socratic dialogue the way that Plato did, except this was far less conceptual. Gandhi legitimately sought to create a better conversation surrounding the subject of Indian independence, and I think any historian would say that he did a good job.

This book definitely requires some historical context, it's not always a fun read, and Gandhi comes off occasionally as containing what I can only call questionable character. I really did not enjoy the multiple references to prostitutes as the end-all-be-all of awfulness. However, there's so much to learn about imperialism from this book, and Gandhi's perspective on Western civilization is as interesting as Marx's. Definitely worth the time for those that are interested, but I believe that as far as historical documents go, there are better options for those more casual about their reading.

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### **Vijeta says**

Written in Dialogue form, Hind Swaraj is very easy to read. It embodies Gandhi's philosophy, his belief in non-violence and passive resistance. Gandhi's view of life is very ascetic and although I've had great admiration for the way he led the national struggle for independence, I can't say I agree with all that he believes. Gandhi was a master strategist and an extremist to the core. His idea of non-violence and passive resistance is not cowardly as is popularly believed but requires a strength of will not easily possessed by all. His vociferous rejection of machinery, railways, the medical profession, and courts of law I find a little simplistic. I understand the reasoning behind denouncing machinery as detrimental to Civilisation, of medicine and the immoral practices involved in devising various life-enhancing drugs, of lawyers and their lies, but I think this denunciation is rather extreme and does not take into account the merits of these developments. His views on peaceful co-existence and Hindu-Muslim unity are still relevant. On the whole, I'd say the book is still applicable if an examination of government and society today is to be made. It raises questions that have resonance for the present times as well, especially in Gandhi's staunch endorsement of realising the core of our religion sans the religious teachers, and also understanding the significance of the ancient Indian Civilisation.

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## **Nick Pelonia says**

A must read if we are to change for the better! The editor enlightens the reader on true swaraj, the corruption of western civilization, and most importantly: self-rule! Written in 9 days on a ship from London.

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## **Nick Klagge says**

As with Martin Luther King, I found it very interesting to read Gandhi in his own words. Although he originally wrote Hind Swaraj in Gujarati, he also translated it into English himself.

In this short book (written in the form of a dialogue), Gandhi takes up the issue of swaraj, or "self rule." At the time he was writing, Indians talked about swaraj as the expulsion of the British colonial government and the establishment of an Indian government. Gandhi, however, takes issue with this definition, and defines swaraj in a more metaphysical way, to mean self-government in the sense of an individual living rightly. His main assertion is that if the Indians overthrow the British and establish self-government "in their image," it won't really be a beneficial change. (I guess he would be very disappointed today.)

Gandhi is extremely critical of modern civilization in this book, including machinery, medicine, and courts of law. Interestingly, he draws mostly on British and American critics of modernity such as Ruskin and Thoreau rather than Indian thinkers. He also draws on religious thought, including Christianity and Islam as well as Hinduism. There is no escaping the fact that Gandhi is an extremist, and he can even come across as quite unfriendly, particularly in the chapters on doctors and lawyers. (He basically says that doctors and lawyers are immoral and eroding society.) In reading these sections, I think it's important to bear in mind that Gandhi is drawing a sharp line between individuals and the roles they play in society. Thus, he is not saying that all lawyers are bad people, but rather, by playing the role of "lawyer," people hurt society. There is no identification between the individual and the profession. Even with this caveat, it's still a pretty extreme position--but Gandhi was a pretty extreme guy.

In contrast to the Jane Jacobs book that I just read, I thought the dialogue format worked well here. The dialogue in HS is much more like one of Plato's. There are only two voices, "Editor" and "Reader." Editor is the Socratic figure who espouses Gandhi's positions, and Reader is the interlocutor who voices conventional wisdom and learns from Editor. It certainly seems contrived, but then again, verisimilitude is not the point. The simplicity of the format clarifies Gandhi's arguments.

I am sympathetic to Gandhi's argument to a certain degree. I definitely agree with his position that a moral society has to be founded on individual morality. I agree to some extent with his critique of modern society (which is largely founded on Ruskin). But I do see it in a somewhat more moderate way, through the lens of Yoder and Berkhof: "modern society" (including things like the law, medicine, the capitalist economy, and machinery) as a set of Powers that are not inherently evil, but that are evil to the extent that they claim ultimate allegiance. A good society would not be one in which these things were done away with, but one in which they were properly ordered and did not make claims of ultimate value.

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## **Paul Cato says**

Fascinating. Written in dialogue form and very blunt. Gandhi's thought is terribly misunderstood, especially

his beliefs on nonviolence. His concepts on civilization bring me back to preachers of Negritude in the 1960s.

Recommended to anyone who believes they're a pacifist, sees Gandhi as a hero (most people have not read his own words) or wants to see Hinduism in modern context.

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### **Carina says**

I only had to read a few parts of this, but I like that even though he's speaking of how India can be liberated from the British, we can learn how we as individuals may also be liberated, from any oppressor. Also, I learned not to accept modernity without a critical eye. This is hard, considering I live in a modern world. It makes me think about the motives of doctors and lawyers...

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### **Hadrian says**

Read for class, specifically Hind Swaraj. This is in the form of a long dialogue about passive resistance, self-rule, right living and other topics which are extremely relevant. It is extremely interesting, of course, to read the most influential thinkers in their own words, and Gandhi is no exception. It is also of interest to note that Gandhi is aware of the naivete of his own goals, but still asserts them, even though he knows their 'Utopian' nature.

I do take issue with his criticism of *\*everything\** modern. Some tools and sciences (medicine, for example) can be used as good. Not all things modern are inherently evil.

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