

# Gandhi and U. VE. Swaminatha Iyer – Absolute Altruists

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**Abstract**— This research article proves that Gandhi and U.Ve.Swaminatha Iyer led an altruistic life. Gandhi aptly named his autobiography 'My experiments with truth'. U.Ve.Sa named his autobiography 'The story of my life' No Indian can forget Gandhi and no Tamilian can forget U.Ve.Sa. They became immortal through their service. Gandhi's life consisted of the struggles that he experienced in his cause and he was aptly called 'The father of the Nation'. U.Ve.Sa attained a permanent place in the field of publishing books. His tireless work for the Tamil language earned him the title 'Thamizh Thatha' For Gandhi, life is non-violence. For U.Ve.Sa, life is research. They were role models for the world.

**Keywords**— selfless, struggles, luminaries, Herculean, mission, publishing, freedom, teachings, reward, recognition, autobiography.

Gandhi and U.Ve.Swaminatha iyer both have rendered a selfless service. These luminaries led an extraordinary life among the ordinary people of this society. Gandhi took great concern for the welfare of the people. U.Ve.Sa concentrated greatly on rejuvenating the slowly disappearing Tamil classical works and making them available for everyone to read it. Kasturiba, Gandhi's wife supported and encouraged him in all his difficulties. Her moral support gave him the strength to withstand the struggles. He has mentioned elaborately about her in his autobiography. U.Ve.Sa worked as a Tamil professor. During weekends, he went for searching manuscripts. He was busy ever. His wife looked after the family and the parents of U.Ve.Sa with utmost care. She gave him a worry free environment at home. Both the luminaries spent little time for their family concerns. It proves their selfless service from their middle age.

Gandhi and U.Ve.Sa never involved themselves in the activities contrary to their conscience. They toiled day and night to achieve in their respective fields. They have accomplished Herculean tasks. They never expected any reward or recognition from anyone. They considered their mission as their duty. They followed the teachings of Gita, 'Do your duty, don't expect any reward'. They executed their duty as a penance. They are noble minded. Patience, honesty and dedication adorned both of them. Gandhi faced many hurdles and insults during the freedom movement of India. U.Ve.Sa faced insults while he went door to door to

collect the classical manuscripts. They ignored the hardships and continued their hard labour.

Gandhi followed the principle of not entering the police station for his personal grievances. He would like to reform the people who harmed him. His policy of pardoning the men has never changed in his whole life. U.Ve.Sa traveled far and wide to collect the palm leaf manuscripts. He never sought profit in his endeavour. Tamil was his breath and life. Tamil was the food for his intellectual hunger. He felt the ecstasy in publishing. Both led altruistic lives. They followed what they spoke. Gandhi's speeches were smooth, emphasized and simple. He spoke carefully and softly. He never aimed at kindling the emotions of the people. He preached what he practised. He started Sevashram in India. His heart wept for the sufferings of the people. U.Ve.Sa planned to set up a library to help the reading public. He spoke so patiently while collecting the palm leaf manuscripts.

Gandhi got monetary help to run his Sevashram from the people. People voluntarily helped him. U.Ve.Sa suffered a lot to publish the Tamil books. After the great hardship only, he got monetary help from some generous people. In all time, both maintained a calm and amiable face. Both practiced nonviolence. While doing service, they never moved emotionally or frantically. Their love and service for humanity are universal. They stood alone like heroes. They faced their hardships alone. They tackled their ordeals alone with a steady mind. While participating in the freedom struggle, Gandhi saw most of the villagers were deprived of

food and dress. So he stopped to wear shirts. He led a humble way of living. U.Ve.Sa got a good position in college. He led a simple way of living. He spent his own money almost for publishing works. His life time aim was publishing rare manuscripts. Both spent less for their personal lives and dedicated more for public life.

Gandhi worked hard even when many riots broke out. When political disorders were staged, he observed fasting for many days. Even though he became weak, he worked tirelessly for the people to leave out violence. U.Ve.Sa traveled many places. Sometimes in the trips, he never got manuscripts. He did not lose hope. He continued his journey with perseverance. Both understood that human experience was a boon to serve others. During freedom struggle, our people had no courage to oppose the British. Gandhi sowed the seeds of non-violence and independence in the minds of the people. Most of the manuscripts were in damaged condition. Many Tamil classics were in oral tradition only. U.Ve.Sa forgot his rest and holidays and gave a complete shape to Tamil literature.

Gandhi's life consisted of the struggles that he experienced in his cause and he was aptly called 'The father of the Nation'. U.Ve.Sa was unable to get the rare books and he had to manage with the worn out palm leaf manuscripts. He attained a permanent place in the field of publishing books. His tireless work for the Tamil language earned him the title 'Thamizh Thatha' Both left a message to the world through their lives. For Gandhi, life is non-violence. For U.Ve.Sa, life is research. They were role models for the world. They did not hide anything from the people's eye. Their life is an open book. Gandhi aptly named his autobiography "My experiments with truth". Their nobility never allowed them to hide anything. No Indian can forget Gandhi and no Tamilian can forget U.Ve.Sa. They became immortal through their service.

By means of doing research in autobiography, the entire humanity is benefited and guided by the personal life of the individual. The readers are sure to be enlightened with the historical, social, cultural, educational and political frame works of that period in a chronological fashion which the author lived and faced the harsh realities of the world. Gandhi boldly declares that he wants to unfold his own experiments in life like stories, even though the provision of autobiography is entirely due to the western culture and custom. U.Ve.Sa was hesitant to write his autobiography. Initially he was only interested in the delineation of his teacher, Mahavidvan Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai. Later he was constrained to write his own. Gandhi's 'My Experiments

with Truth' is of great general interest to many countries. U.Ve.Sa's 'The Story of My life' is of particular interest to philologists, scholars, linguists, historians and grammarians.

Both involved in the arduous task and selfless service of nation and language. Gandhi relinquished his law profession in search of freedom for people. U.Ve.Sa desisted his study of Sanskrit, Telugu and Music in preference to the study of Classical Tamil. From their tireless labour only, the present independent India and Classical Tamil Literature have arisen. Their autobiographies will mould the readers. Knowing the past of great men will make our present and future better. Both proved that emerging from a rich family is not necessary to do service.

The aim of the autobiographical literature is not merely to blow one's own trumpet. These two autobiographies are not with the aim of self-appraisal. Gandhi and U.Ve.Sa openly explained their hurdles. Their dedication for the common welfare of the people, their sacrifice, their determination of surpassing the obstacles and final success are vividly carried out in this research article.

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