

*Mr Secretary  
Senator Cooper - Member of Congress*

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

REMARKS

GANDHI BOOK PRESENTATION

January 17, 1967

↳ Ambassador Nehru, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the people of the United States, I thank the Government of India most warmly for the gift of these many sets of Mahatma Gandhi's collected writings which Ambassador Nehru has just presented to me.

↳ On such occasions as this, the peoples of India and the United States reaffirm their desires to disseminate widely the teachings of the Mahatma. This reminds us again of the heavy responsibility our two democracies bear for sharing with the world those concepts about man in all his many relationships with society which we have been privileged to

inherit from our great men of the past, and which we consider to be of universal ~~applicability~~ *application*.

↳ In his remarks, the Ambassador referred to the timelessness and universality of Gandhi's mission to the world and to the particular reverence with which we Americans recall Gandhi's message of equality, freedom and love for man everywhere. Gandhi's humble, direct simplicity touched our hearts as it touched the hearts of all those throughout the globe who would, in some small measure, seek to be their brothers' keepers. His signal contribution was in reminding the 20th Century of what other "Great Souls" in centuries past had told a weary and, too often, strife-ridden world -- that the brother for whom we bear responsibility is every man on whom we look, in whatever community, race or nation we may find him.

I have often reflected on the remarkable degree to which the interaction of certain aspects of the Indian and

American philosophical traditions came into focus in Gandhi's person. Many of America's early writers and thinkers -- for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman -- were challenged and inspired by the writings of the Hindu seers who had spoken of God's ~~immortality and~~ universality. For these Americans the ancient Hindu writings furnished a most persuasive philosophic and religious bases for man's political, as well as spiritual equality and freedom to argue that in the practical everyday world the free man, when he is convinced that right is on his side and that principle is at stake, must passively resist the entire weight of his society, if necessary to protect that principle.

↳ In his nonviolent campaign to free India from British rule, Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged his own debt to Thoreau's example and writings of a century before. Today leaders of minorities in the United States seeking social and economic

gains for their groups express their appreciation for Gandhi's example of struggle against evils which he felt divided men from each other and debased humanity as a whole.

For more than a century and a half, India and America have been discovering each other and, in the process, rediscovering their own best selves through great men like Gandhi.

While I am pleased at the great interest being shown in the Gandhi Birth Centenary by many groups here in the United States, I am even more gratified at learning of the extent to which the international community will share with India many of the commemorative events scheduled in connection with the Centenary during the next two years.

In recalling that Gandhi belonged to all mankind, the peoples and nations of the world could do nothing better in the closing years of this decade than to affirm resolutely

that the principles of concern for others by which that  
great yet humble man lived should motivate and guide us  
all in our relationships with one another.

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