Gandhi’s Modus Operandi: “I preach, you practice” Part I

Hi, Everyone! Gandhi has spouted his “lofty” principles often and often, but only a cursory glance is sufficient to drive home the fact that rarely did he hold himself accountable to them. I shall only point out a few, but telling, instances.

· **The Vow of Poverty was certainly an ideal Gandhi upheld.**

How did he follow it?

He collected thousands of Rupees from his benefactors, encouraged industrialists to keep making a fortune and make donations, lived in palatial homes, traveled first class, ate an expensive special diet, and he even accepted gifts and sold them for money.

This is what his biographer Keer writes in *Mahatma Gandhi: Political saint and unarmed Prophet*:

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“Answering the query about his expenses, he [Gandhi] said: ‘I do make the claim that I attempt to act as I preach. But I must confess that I am not as inexpensive in my wants as I would like to be.’ . . .

Yet Gandhi had at his disposal the biggest fund ever collected in the world by a political party, and he spent millions on political propaganda. His was an expensive leadership. Just to humor him, first class railway saloons were sometimes called second class. Just to satisfy his love of simplicity, palaces were called huts. It is no exaggeration to say that Gandhi’s menu and living were undoubtedly expensive.”

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“He [Gandhi] left Manglore on October 28 and reached Bombay on the morning of October 29 by the S.S. *Vegavati*. As usual, Gandhi did a little ‘business’ on the launch taking him to the steamer, by selling one of the gifts of the previous evening for Rs. 125.”

But the very *worst* of all is the fact that he made a profit from his speeches on spirituality in England in 1931 . . . !

“Meanwhile Gandhi attended a journalists’ party, visited India Office and gave a spiritual message for a gramophone company, drawing a profit of £5,000.”[1]

· **Gandhi considered surgery, injections etc. to be against his “staunch” principles of nonviolence.**

His wife died in dire straits, but he did not allow the doctor to give her the newly discovered penicillin shot.

And *yet* there are at least two operations that Gandhi himself underwent: one for hemorrhoids in January 1919, and another for appendicitis in January of 1924. He also took fifteen shots prior to the operations, in the hope that they would give him relief from his ailment.[2]

Eighteen months after the death of his wife, Gandhi developed what Keer calls “malignant malaria.” His blood pressure was high at the time, too. This is how Gandhi’s health at the time is described by the Gandhiserve Manibhavan website:

“Gandhi was released from Aga Khan Palace on 6th May, 1944. During his detention, he had developed hook worm and amoebic infection in addition to malaria. All this led to acute anemia.”

I have been unable to find even one reference in his biographies or the Gandhi websites as to *how*Gandhi was able to recover from this *severe*sickness—especially without the aid of modern medicines which he had just a little while before deprived his dying wife of.

I did find online an excerpt from one book, *100 Things You’re Not Supposed to Know* by Russ

Kirk (pp. 167-169), which claims:

“A mere six weeks after Kasturba died, Gandhi was flattened by malaria. He stuck to an all-liquid diet as his doctors tried to convince him to take quinine. But Gandhi completely refused and died of the disease, right? No, actually, after three weeks of deterioration, he took the diabolical drug and quickly recovered. The stuff about trusting God’s will and testing faith only applied when his wife’s life hung in the balance. When he needed a drug to stave off the Grim Reaper, down the hatch it went.”

I haven’t found corroboration—yet. Hopefully, the book itself will give a reference where this information came from.

· In his *Hind Swaraj* (reprinted with Gandhi’s full backing over and over for many years) Gandhi advocates that true nonviolence lies in making it easy for a thief to steal one’s home. And yet, what did he do when his ashram was being robbed? Here it is:[3]

“Nor could he [Gandhi] follow his principle in respect of thieving. When thieves attempted to steal things from the Asharam, Gandhi instead of asking, as he did in *Hind Swara*j, ‘to keep your things in a manner most accessible to him’ instructed Maganlal to ask someone to sleep in the verandah and send others also to do so.”

More tomorrow . . .

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Mahatma Gandhi Facts: Gandhi Revealed

[1]Keer's biography on Gandhi, page 560

[2] Check in: http://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/aboutgandhi/chrono_gandhiinbombay.htm#1919

[3] *Ibid* page 268