



DR. SATISH KUMAR

Recipient of the International Award for Promoting Gandhian Values Outside India - 2001

Born: March 9, 1936

Educational Qualification: Doctor of Education, University of Plymouth (United Kingdom); Diploma in Literature (Honours), University of Lancaster

Whilst he was a Jain monk, Dr. Satish Kumar was so much inspired by the Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi that he gave up his monk life and went to live in a Gandhi Ashram in Bodh Gaya established by Vinoba Bhave. He joined Vinobaji in various Padayatra from time to time in India and his life was transformed. He became a living example of both spirituality and social work.

Satish Kumar worked with the Bhoodan Movement from 1956-62. Then one day he and his friend E.P. Menon read that the great British philosopher Bertrand Russell had been arrested and put in gaol because he was protesting against nuclear weapons. This inspired him to follow the example of the great philosopher. In 1962, he set off on foot and without any money from the Gandhi Samadhi in Rajghat, New Delhi to walk to Moscow, Paris, London and Washington - the four nuclear capitals - to protest against the bomb and to campaign for disarmament and peace. This 8000 mile walk took Satish Kumar through many countries where he met ordinary people as well as world leaders including Bertrand Russel and Martin Luther King. He was welcomed with open arms and tremendous response.

Satish Kumar impressed the Western peace movement in such a way that Canon John Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral in London invited him to establish the London School of Non-violence. This was in the late 1960s when the idea of armed revolution was capturing the hearts and minds of young people. Therefore, Satish Kumar's work through the London School of Non-Violence became profoundly influential in training young people to seek non-violent social change, peaceful resistance and transformation of life-style based on the principles of equality, frugality and simplicity.

His work in the field of peace and non-violence, ecology and social justice came to the attention of the Rev. John Papworth and the late Dr. E.F. Schumacher, who in 1975 invited Satish Kumar to edit "Resurgence" magazine. This magazine promotes the principles of "Small is Beautiful" and a life-style in harmony with the well-being of Planet Earth. Satish Kumar at first was reluctant to leave India for a permanent position in England, but Schumacher pointed out that "There are many Gandhians doing good work in India and we need a Gandhian in the West to promote the cause of Nonviolence". Satish Kumar as the editor of "Resurgence" has become an effective medium of social, political, environmental and spiritual communication. Some of the most outstanding holistic thinkers of the world have contributed their innovative and radical ideas through its pages.

Dr. Satish Kumar has established in the village of Hartland in the South West of England a local school called "The Small School" which is conducted on Gandhian principles. Children learn the practical skills of cooking, gardening, pottery, wood work, ecological conservation and community service in addition to the normal academic subjects and the arts. There are at present, eight similar Small Schools in the UK where ideas of holistic and practical education are implemented.

Satish Kumar also persuaded the Dartington Hall Trust (originally inspired by the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore) to establish an international college for adults on their 2000 acre estate. This Schumacher College has been operational since 1991 specifically for the study of ecological and spiritual values and brings together thinkers and students from all walks of life. The model of Schumacher College is very much based on a Gandhian Ashram. The international community of students begins their day with a period of meditation, prayers and spiritual reading. Everyone participates in looking, cleaning and other domestic tasks. Work is an integral part of study at Schumacher College. The outstanding quality of the teachers and the integrated interdisciplinary manner has earned the college a world-wide reputation. Dr. Satish Kumar is the Director of Programmes and teacher of Reverential Ecology, attending the College two days a week, whilst also participating with students in the preparation of the meals each Monday.

