

Soulmates: The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach*

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Some years back, I wrote a series of articles for a popular geographical magazine about the “Israeli Trail” – a hiking track across Israel. During that hike which I personally undertook, in a cemetery near the Sea of Galilee, I came across the neglected grave of Hermann Kallenbach, where his ashes are buried.

So I published a few lines about Kallenbach. Surprisingly, this resulted in an invitation by Mrs. Isa Sarid – Kallenbach’s niece – to “have a look” at the family archive. The archive was located in a tiny room in a small apartment up on the Carmel Mountain in Haifa. On the shelves there were numerous files carrying the name of Gandhi. One of the less known and missing chapters of Gandhi’s early biography was still waiting for a researcher to pick up the challenge.

Finding an archive like this might be the fantasy of any historian, but at that time I did not consider myself a historian. It was over a year later that I was trusted enough to be given the permission to copy the documents from the archive. It took five years more to complete my research. Still, even at that very first visit, I knew that the result should and would be a book. In 2012, it was published in India as *Soulmates: The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach*.

The story of Gandhi and Kallenbach, in my opinion, is a deeply intimate and personal story. But it also has historical and academic importance. This story is fascinating for yet another reason, as it proves and emphasizes the possibility of cross cultural influences which can cause much greater outcomes, as was manifested in Gandhi’s impact on the world’s history.

The cross culture aspects of this story involve Lithuania, South Africa, India and Israel. It involves a young and successful architect named Hermann Kallenbach, as well as an ambitious young Indian lawyer named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who at that time was perhaps unaware he was to become the fu-

* This article is based on the public lecture delivered by Dr. Shimon Lev in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 1 October 2015, on the occasion of unveiling the monument to Gandhi and Kallenbach. All quotations provided in the article are authentic; their full references, which have originally been skipped owing to the genre of a public speech and hence not reproduced in this article, can be found in the author’s other works listed on the bibliography list of the article.

ture Mahatma. Both Gandhi and Kallenbach were searching for their identities while living as unwelcome immigrants in South Africa.

But this story also involves Leo Tolstoy, the prophet of non-violence, who was among the main critics of Western civilization. It involves Hindus, Christians, Jews, Muslims, alongside with staunch Tolstoians and Theosophists as well as white racism. It also involves two ancient Asian nations on the process of a national revival, struggling for freedom in the age of the collapse of imperialism. But it also contains the most catastrophic event of the 20th century – World War II and the Holocaust. Gandhi on one hand, Hitler on the other – probably the two most famous figures of their time, but what a difference! And in-between there was Kallenbach, who was on the one hand a believer in non-violence, as a disciple of Gandhi, but on the other hand, shared the fears of the fate of his Jewish brothers in Europe, and particularly tried at the very last moment in 1939 to rescue his brother Simon Kallenbach's family, as well as his other relatives, from the Nazi-occupied Klaipėda (Memel) in Western Lithuania.

Rarely can a historian come across such a story. But even if he does, he faces the risk of “destroying” it with the instrumentation of dry, boring academic facts and references. It is a true challenge to manage this risk, while at the same time giving due credit to the importance of this relationship in a broader historical perspective.

His relationship with Kallenbach played an important part during Gandhi's most critical and formative years in South Africa. Gandhi's twenty-one years in South Africa was the period in which he fully matured as the future Mahatma. All the components of his social-religious doctrine were developed there before he returned to India. Thus, the roots of every activity that he did as a key leader in the Indian struggle for independence was rooted in his South African experience. This fact by itself can give us more than a hint about how important his relationship with Kallenbach was. I claim that one cannot understand Gandhi's process of development without studying his surroundings and encounters with his Indian and European supporters in South Africa. And of all the European supporters, Kallenbach was Gandhi's most intimate friend, his “soulmate.” Kallenbach was the one who shared Gandhi's most inner feelings, fears, hopes, ambitions, sorrows, joys and spiritual seeking. He is the one who also took a very active part in Gandhi's various religious and lifestyle experiments. But in addition, he also played a key role in helping the Indian Struggle with his many practical abilities. Kallenbach was the one whom Gandhi could most trust, and to whom he could reflect his spiritual and political advances. When Kallenbach traveled in 1911 from Tolstoy Farm to visit his family in Lithuania, Gandhi defined them as “Spiritual Rope-Walkers.”

The Gandhi-Kallenbach relationship also contained a “second round,” which took place during Kallenbach’s Zionist mission to India in 1937. Kallenbach was asked by the Zionist leader and future Prime Minister of Israel Moshe Sharet to brief Gandhi on Zionism, and to try to get his support for a Jewish homeland aspiration in Palestine. Thus, the Gandhi-Kallenbach relationship not only traverses the dramatic events of the first half of the 20th century, but also connects the two great national movements: the Indian and the Zionist.

During the 1931 Round Table conference in London, Gandhi told a Jewish Chronicle reporter: “I have a world of friends among the Jews. In South Africa, I was surrounded by Jews.” And indeed this was a unique phenomenon, as among Gandhi’s closest circle Jews were many. One of them was Mr. Louise Rich, founder of the Johannesburg Lodge of the Theosophical Society; another was Gabriel Issac, a jewelry merchant; others were the Fogels, one of whom invited Gandhi to the Seder (Pesach dinner) and took him to the synagogue. Gandhi actually liked the “crispy Matzah,” but found the prayers to be long and uninspiring. There was of course Sonia Schlesin, his devoted Jewish secretary, whom Kallenbach had brought to work with Gandhi, as he knew her family from his Lithuanian time, and who was very highly praised by Gandhi in his autobiography.

But the two men who constituted Gandhi’s “whole world” were the English Jew Henry Pollak and the Lithuanian Jew Herman Kallenbach. They were called “Gandhi’s loyal prime ministers.” One can define Pollak as Gandhi’s political man, but Kallenbach was undoubtedly his intimate one.

The Theosophical Connection

The encounter Gandhi had with the influential group of the Theosophical Society in London is well known. In South Africa, even though he distanced himself and refused to become a formal member of the Society, the Theosophists were Gandhi’s best recruiting ground for his European followers. Strangely enough, most of his Jewish supporters came from the Theosophical circle as well. As Jews, they were attracted to the Theosophical Society, which offered a universal approach, “inward” soul-searching, self-divinizing perfectionism, and non-orthodox opportunity to explore spiritual ideas. These Jews sought the universal dimension, first in the occult and the doctrine of Madam Blavetzky and Annie Besant, but later shifted their interest to the Indian lawyer. In order to understand the implications of the involvement of these Jews, one must also recognize their importance in the wider historical context of the later Jewish opposition to the Apartheid. As the late Nelson Mandela wrote: “In my experience, I have found Jews to be more broad-minded than most whites on issues of race and

politics, perhaps because they themselves have historically been victims of prejudice.” The root for that support was laid by Kallenbach and Polak. However, one should also remember that these individuals were actually going against the mainstream opinion of the South African Jewish community, and sometimes even against their own families. Thus, Kallenbach’s family regarded him as one who was trapped by “Gandhi’s Spell.”

Indians and Jews in South Africa

One can only speak about the predominately “textual encounter” between Jewish culture and Indian culture during the age of Orientalism. Raymond Scwab has called it the “Orientalist Reminiscence.” It was manifested mainly through the passion for translating ancient Vedic texts, just like the rest of Europe was going crazy about studying Sanskrit at that time. This interesting subject is not in the scope of this article, but it is important to emphasize that Jews in Europe had hardly met any Indian ever, just like the majority of the Indians of the vastly populated Indian subcontinent had never met a single Jew. Although there were ancient Jewish communities in India, their microscopic size made them insignificant. Actually, as it seems to me, the first real encounter between Jews and Indians happened when the Lithuanian-origin Jews (so-called “Litvak Jews”) who had emigrated to South Africa met the Indians who also emigrated from India to South Africa. So a few words about South Africa, Indians, Jews, and racism.

South African society at the end of the 19th century comprised a minority of whites and a vast majority of black people. There were also other minor communities of “colored” peoples, like Indian, Malay and a small Chinese minority. Racial classification was the single most defining factor in one’s social life. The social structure was divided into racial “castes,” with the privileged white group at the top of the pyramid. Politically, from the end of the 19th century until the end of apartheid, South Africa was a parliamentary democracy for its white residents and a white oligarchy for all the others.

The majority of Asians in South Africa were Indians. A small number were relatively well-to-do Muslim and Hindu merchants, but the rest were indentured workers working under conditions of quasi-slavery. Theoretically, the workers could choose either to return to India after five years of indenture or stay on in South Africa as “free Indians.” However, in order to prevent the laborers becoming free Indians, the South African government put special restricting laws in place.

After a few decades of such policies, the Indians in South Africa outnumbered the whites. In an effort to limit the so-called “Asian invasion,” the government proceeded to pass a series of decrees. For example, Asians were forbidden to purchase

land and to be in certain areas at night. They were further compelled to reside in designated areas which were called “locations.” Gandhi compared them to the Jewish ghetto. When Gandhi arrived in South Africa, he became the chief spokesman and leader of the Indian population in their struggle for a better attitude.

Meanwhile, Jewish immigration to South Africa was a by-product of massive Jewish migration from Lithuania to America via England. As a result of tempting descriptions in the Jewish press, where South Africa was called the “Promised Land”, many Litvak Jews decided to try their luck in South Africa. Ironically, those Jews, who sought refuge from the anti-Semitic repression of the Russian Tsar, found themselves in a society based on racial discrimination. Luckily for them, this time their racial-ethnic characteristics identified them with the ruling white population.

In the South African society of the late 19th century, a Jewish immigrant entered a framework of a purely white social group, and within this group he remained until the end of his life. Apart from the economic realm, in which he had, like all the other whites, master-slave relations with the non-whites, he did not belong to any non-white social institutions and had no social relations with non-whites. Ultimately, the Lithuanian and English Jewish communities in South Africa merged so much that the newly born South African Jewish community was described as “pouring Lithuanian wine into Anglo-Jewish bottles.” Another thing to be emphasized is that once they landed on the shores of South Africa escaping racism at home, the majority of South African Jews became racist themselves. In this context, Kallenbach’s support of Gandhi and the Indian Struggle stands out as a truly unique phenomenon.

Kallenbach’s Lithuanian Roots

Kallenbach’s father, Kalman Leib Kalmanovich, was a teacher in a town in the province of Žemaitija in Western Lithuania, barely two kilometers from the East Prussian (German) border of that time. Kalman and his wife Rachel decided to cross the border with their three children: Janet, Samuel, and Hermann and settle in the village of Rusnė, then under the German rule, but now part of Lithuania. There he changed his name to Kallenbach and opened a successful saw mill on the riverbank of the Nemunas River, and four more children were born. Before World War I, Rusnė played an important role in exporting timber from Russia to Klaipėda (Memel, then under the German rule). In the rural atmosphere of Rusnė, nature played a significant role in defining the Kallenbach’s family life. Sports was a major pastime and Hermann excelled at it more than his brothers. He swam from a young age, ice-skated on the frozen river in winter, crossed the Alps on a bicycle with his school friends, fished, and played tennis.

Kalman's timber business prospered, so the parents decided to send their children to school in Klaipėda and, later, Tilsit (modern day Sovetsk). In 1890, Herman began his studies of architecture in the Strelitz Technikum in Germany. He continued his studies in the Royal School of Architecture in Stuttgart. Upon completion of his studies, he was drafted to serve as an officer in the military. He was discharged in October 1895, and on May of the next year he passed the architecture certification exams cum laude. After that, Herman migrated to South Africa, where his two uncles already had a very successful business. He started to work as an architect within a few days of his immigration, and soon he became a successful architect too.

The Meeting between Gandhi and Kallenbach

Neither Gandhi's nor Kallenbach's correspondence provides much details about their first meeting. The two most probably met in late 1903, at a professional level. A fruitful encounter between two people from such different worlds even today seems implausible. True, they were of approximately the same age (Kallenbach was thirty-two and Gandhi was thirty-four), and both had arrived in South Africa as immigrants. But the differences between the two were much larger to surmount. Kallenbach was Jewish, tall, white, secular, bachelor, ostentatious, a highly capable and affluent architect, lover of a wide variety of sports, theatre, luxuries, and women, addicted to satisfying his personal passions; and obviously enjoying his status as a member of the white ruling society. Meanwhile, Gandhi was an Asian lawyer, ascetic, frugal, focused on religion, morality, and truth, a family man on the brink of starting a life of celibacy (Brahmacharya), and dedicated to a public mission of social-religious reform of his community. Indeed, it is perhaps precisely these differences that account for their mutual attraction and would form the basis for their unique relationship.

In his autobiography, Gandhi describes his astonishment at Kallenbach's hedonistic lifestyle:

"We met quite by accident. He was a friend of Mr. Khan's and, as the latter had discovered deep down in him a vein of other-worldliness, he introduced him to me. When I came to know him, I was startled at his love of luxury and extravagance. But at our very first meeting, he asked searching questions concerning matters of religion. Our acquaintance soon ripened into a very close friendship, so much so that we thought alike, and he was convinced that he must carry out in his life the changes I was making in mine."

The Upper House and the Lower House

The relationship between Gandhi and Kallenbach, which began on these formal grounds, quickly developed into a personal friendship. Kallenbach began to participate in Indian protest meetings, to support Gandhi financially and to visit Indians who were imprisoned as a result of the non-violent struggle. In 1907 or 1908, Gandhi and Kallenbach began living together. The two lived nearly a year and a half in Kallenbach's home in Johannesburg, the Kraal on Pine Road (so called due to the traditional African elements integrated into the building). Later, they shared an isolated "tent" in Mountain View on Linksfield Ridge near Johannesburg for seven months. The time during which Gandhi and Kallenbach lived together in Johannesburg constitutes one of the less written about periods in Gandhi's life, and there is a lack of information about it.

One of the interesting pieces of evidence for this mysterious period can be found in a letter sent by Kallenbach to his brother Simon to Klaipėda (Memel), attempting to explain the dramatic changes he was making in his life:

"Mr. Gandhi, a dear friend of mine to whom I am very much beholden, sits at the same table with me in the kitchen and writes. Mr. Gandhi lives with me for the last three months. For the last five weeks we have no native servant and therefore we are attending ourselves to all our work. We cook, bake, scrub and clean the house and the yard. We polish our own shoes and work in the flower and vegetable garden. We are leading a most unusual life which helps a person to devolve independently and the person to become better (...) For the last two years I have given up meat-eating (...), for the last 18 months I have given up my sex life. (...) I have changed my daily life in order to simplify it and I found out that in every direction, this change has helped me..."

One can only imagine the anxiety his family must have experienced. After all, Kallenbach's new lifestyle in accordance with the social-moral principles of Tolstoy and Gandhi, as well as his decision to support the Indian struggle and to live together with an Indian in faraway South Africa, must have perplexed Kallenbach's Jewish bourgeois family. They were sure that he had gone mad!

In his second autobiography, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Gandhi describes that period with a sense of humor:

"He (Kallenbach) would be hurt if I offered to pay him my share of the household expenses, and he would plead that I was responsible for considerable savings in his domestic economy. This was indeed true."

An exemplary episode, which can describe the atmosphere of their shared life, was the famous story, which developed later as one of the myths about Gandhi. When Gandhi was released from jail, Kallenbach went to pick him up in his new car which was at that time very unusual. Kallenbach recounted this event:

"He sat in it, but not without a torment that could be read on his face. For the moment he was quiet, but when we got back home he berated me severely for my folly. 'Put a match to it at once,' he said. Instead of destroying it, it remained in the garage for over a year and was disposed of. But for eleven years after that incident I did not have a motor car."

Gandhi summarized his experience as a "two-men ashram": "Both of us were living a sort of ashram life (...) We were trying to seek the root of every activity in religion."

Around this time, the two began writing each other using the nicknames "The Upper House" (Gandhi) and "The Lower House" (Kallenbach) throughout their extensive correspondence, most probably referring to the British Parliament constituting of House of Commons and House of Lords. In the context of his new lifestyle, Kallenbach was obliged to save every penny and was allowed to spend money only after Gandhi, "The Upper House," approved the expense.

Tolstoy Farm

The exciting part, which constitutes one of Kallenbach's most significant contributions, was the purchase of Tolstoy Farm, as well as his deep involvement in developing and running it. Gandhi understood that he had to establish a place for the impoverished group of Indians who were still willing to fight. This was a time of crisis, since the Indian merchants had stopped their financial support of the struggle. Gandhi aspired to establish a communal place, which would enable simple life in the spirit of Tolstoy. Kallenbach rushed to his aid, and in 1910 purchased a large farm located south of Johannesburg, which he gifted to Gandhi. Kallenbach also wrote to Leo Tolstoy from the farm, explaining why he named it after him:

"I have read many of your works, and your teachings have impressed me deeply... Having made use of your name, I thought I owe you this explanation and may add as justification of having used this name that it will make me endeavor to live up the ideas which you have so fearlessly given to the world."

Gandhi also wrote to Tolstoy and described Kallenbach as a similitude of Tolstoy himself:

“Mr. Kallenbach and I have been friends for many years. I may say that he has gone through most of the experiences that you have so graphically described in your work *My Confessions*. No writing has so deeply touched Mr. Kallenbach as yours....”

Tolstoy replied to Gandhi, in a prophetic manner, that the non-violence struggle in faraway South Africa was the most important one going on in the whole world... Indeed, it is impossible to ignore the parallels that Gandhi draws between the journey of Kallenbach – the successful, hedonistic architect under Gandhi’s spiritual guidance – and the quest of Tolstoy which made him the great prophet of simple life and non-violence.

Gandhi and Kallenbach moved to Tolstoy Farm in July 1910. Homes, schools, a carpentry shop and workshops were planned by Kallenbach and built quickly. In the Farm, collective communal life materialized fully and constituted the prototype of the future Gandhian ashram in India. This period was characterized by bursts of energy and spiritual development, and Kallenbach was the ideal partner, one who tried to implement every idea immediately. For example, when Gandhi claimed that consuming milk products was not healthy, Kallenbach proposed stopping their consumption at that very moment, and so it was. Self-labor, according to Tolstoy’s doctrine, was a substantial principle, and that is why Kallenbach learned how to make sandals in a monastery. He taught Gandhi the same, and after a short period the latter took pride in the fact that he made fifteen pairs of sandals. Before he left for India, Gandhi even sent one pair to his bitter rival, the South African leader Jan Smuts.

At the end of the day, both Gandhi and Kallenbach were exhausted from the day’s work, but they would still jump upon long conversations about religion, non-violence, love, food, health and... whether it is good to kill the poisonous snakes swarming in the Farm (obviously not!) Kallenbach joined Gandhi in teaching at the mixed Hindu-Muslim school, a unique educational enterprise Gandhi viewed as extremely important.

The issue of walking the 42 km by foot from the Farm to Johannesburg was important to Gandhi. The residents competed to see who would cover the distance the fastest. The record was held by Jamnadas Kaka, who walked the twenty-two miles in four hours and thirty-five minutes. Kallenbach tried to break this record. To save time, he would snatch food from a wayside stall and toss down payment without stopping to take his change; this was faster than stopping to

take food out of his backpack. Though he broke Kaka's record by a few minutes, Gandhi did not mark him down as the winner, claiming that purchase of non-Farm foods was against the rules of the Farm.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the cooperative experiment called Tolstoy Farm and its influence on the formation of the social and spiritual ideologies of Gandhi. The Farm was a laboratory for testing Gandhi's ideas; it enabled him to realize the applicability of his methodologies in daily life. Gandhi wrote:

"My faith and courage were at their highest in Tolstoy Farm. I have been praying to God to permit me to re-attain that height, but the prayer has not yet been heard."

In Tolstoy Farm, Gandhi built his leadership facility, a capacity which was further developed during the final stage of the Indian Struggle in South Africa. These undertakings prepared him for his unique leadership in India.

Kallenbach's Visit to Europe

Kallenbach missed his family in Germany and Lithuania, which he did not see for many years. In 1911, when the Indian Struggle was on hold, it was a suitable time to undertake this visit. But this was not supposed to be a "regular family visit;" Kallenbach and Gandhi regarded this trip as a "holy mission" and a "pilgrimage," whose objective was to generate a change in Kallenbach's family's life. The two even signed a unique contract which lights the aims of this visit and their demanding way of life:

"Lower House is to proceed to Europe on a sacred pilgrimage to the members of his family (...) Lower House is not to spend any money beyond necessities befitting the position of a simple living poor farmer. Lower House (...) shall not look lustfully upon any woman...."

From the very beginning of his visit, Kallenbach set about trying to convince his family to change their lifestyle according to the values dear to him. He constantly preached about living a healthier and more modest life. Gandhi wrote him: "You have made yourself an advertising agent for me. You compel people to like me where before they did not. I can only hope that I shall die as you think I am."

The beginning was promising, but his relationship with his niece Judith was problematic and put Kallenbach on a difficult test. This strange story is explored

in greater detail in my book *Soulmates. The Story of Mahatma Gandhi and Hermann Kallenbach*, so I will not delve into it again. Suffice it to say that Kallenbach's feelings towards Judith provoked Gandhi to remind him of the contract they had concluded before Kallenbach's departure to Europe.

The Indian Struggle resumed at the end of 1913. Kallenbach had a crucial and key role in supporting the Great March. He was logistically responsible for the movement of thousands of Indians who crossed the border in order to get arrested. After Gandhi's and Pollak's arrest, Kallenbach remained the only leader of the thousands of marchers until he, too, was arrested. In prison, Kallenbach wrote a diary-letter which was sent to his family. Kallenbach describes his arrest in greatly romanticized detail:

"The day of my arrest is to me 'the day of the Lord.' It was about 7 pm, a mild South African evening; the moon was just rising behind the historical Majuba Mountains, when an elderly police officer approached with a telegram in his hand. He saluted and asked me to step aside with him for a moment. He told me that he had just received this telegram with the command for my arrest, and he much regretted being the one to carry out this duty. I comforted him, thanked him for the message. I remained alone. The heavy prison door closed, the loud rattling of the keys and the sound of the departing steps of the warden were wonderful to my ear. There was now a strange silence. All the prisoners seemed to sleep soundly. In the meantime, also the soft light of the moon entered the courtyard. With all my heart I sent up my prayers to god, thanking him that he had deemed me worthy of this experience in my life. Thus began the first night in the prison which will not leave my memory ever."

To his disappointment, Kallenbach was only sentenced to three months in jail, without hard labor.

The Trip to England and the Detention Camp

At the end of the struggle in 1914, Gandhi took Kallenbach to India with him as his right arm. During the farewell reception, Kallenbach was told: "In the history of the great Passive Resistance movement, your name will glitter in letters of gold." Gandhi placed his hand over Kallenbach's shoulder and said:

"I carry away with me not my blood brother, but my European brother. Is not that sufficient earnest of what South Africa has given to me and is it possible for me to forget South Africa for a single moment?"

The philosophical conversation about the fate of Kallenbach's expensive binoculars, which the two had during their cruise on the way to London, laid the ground for another myth. Gandhi argued that these binoculars were a luxury and the "possession [of them] was not in line with the ideal of simplicity" professed by him; therefore, Kallenbach should get rid of them. Kallenbach said they were useful for the long journey on the sea. At the end of the argument, Gandhi tossed the expensive binoculars into the ocean. Kallenbach cried for the entire day.

Unfortunately, they arrived in England on the 6th of August, two days after World War I broke out. Gandhi's efforts to obtain a travel permit to India for Kallenbach, who was a German citizen, failed, and Gandhi had to continue his journey to India with Kallenbach's "books and boxes" only. In June 1915, when Kallenbach was imprisoned in a detention camp for alien citizens, Gandhi took care to write him once a week. But the correspondence stopped in 1917. Kallenbach was freed and sent to Berlin in a prisoner exchange. Strangely, Kallenbach did not inform Gandhi of his release. He certainly did not attempt to join Gandhi in India. It is difficult to explain this interruption. It is obvious that the cause wasn't purely the technical communication difficulties in the aftermath of the war; rather, there must have been psychological reasons for that. While Gandhi was making a name for himself as the leader of a mass movement in India, Kallenbach was penniless, lonely, and wandering aimlessly in Berlin, which he described to his brother Simon as a "corrupt city with selfish residents." The disillusioned Kallenbach must have felt deserted by Gandhi. Kallenbach decided to take some time away from his relationship with Gandhi in order to re-examine his life. In addition, his family had never understood his choice to live as an ascetic under Gandhi's influence and pressured him to adopt a lifestyle more similar to their own. Kallenbach would have found it difficult to counter the argument his family must have made that the one most responsible for his tragic fate and the present chaos in his life was no other than Gandhi himself.

Reunion

Kallenbach returned to South Africa in 1920, and the excited Gandhi, who somehow discovered that Kallenbach was alive, wrote him:

"If I was free, I would have run down most decidedly to meet you, hug you and once more look you in the face. For me you have risen from the dead (...) I had decided that you had left this little globe of ours. You cannot imagine the joy

of the thought I may yet see you in the flesh and mean while begin to receive your love letters."

In another letter he wrote: "As I write, the whole of the old life rises before me. But I must restrain myself."

In 1936, Moshe Sharett, head of the political department of the Zionist Movement, learned that Gandhi had a very close Jewish friend. He wrote Kallenbach a passionate letter, asking him to go on "a Zionist mission" to India to try to change the Mahatma's negative views on Zionism. He wrote: "You are in a unique position to help Zionism in a field where the resources of the Jewish people are so meagre as to be practically non-existent."

Kallenbach responded positively and set off to Gandhi's ashram in May 1937. It is hard to depict the emotional context of the meeting after 23 years of separation. Kallenbach arrived at four-thirty in the morning. He entered the big porch overlooking the ocean and sat on the floor silently. Gandhi and a small group of disciples were busy with the morning prayers. It was still dark outside. Kallenbach described the meeting to his brother Simon in Klaipėda:

"When the prayers were over, we all stood up, me too with little difficulty having lost the habit of sitting on the floor. Bapu approached me, embraced me and put the question after how many years? Come to the light that I have a good look at you. He drew me into a room, took a lantern and lit my face and head. Touching my head, he said: your hair has turned gray like mine (...) It is almost the old way of life that we have accepted, as if the 23 years and all the happenings which affected millions of people had not been in between."

Kallenbach stayed in the ashram for about six weeks, ate and slept beside Gandhi and talked with him a lot about Zionism. A careful reading of Gandhi's letters to Kallenbach from that time reveals a surprising, fascinating and perhaps unknown gap between Gandhi's known public objection to Zionism and his support of Kallenbach's "private Zionism." Gandhi even wanted to mediate in the struggle between Arabs and Jews and designated Kallenbach and the priest Andrews for this purpose.

After Gandhi's mediation attempt received no response from the Zionist Organization, Gandhi came out with his famous proclamation "The Jews" in 1938, in which he called the Jews to disobey Nazi laws, to begin civil resistance and to be ready to die as a result. Kallenbach came for another visit in 1939, on the eve of the war. Gandhi wrote about Kallenbach in this context, a fact which empha-

sizes the tension between his non-violence doctrine and what was going on in Europe. Kallenbach was used as an example:

"I happen to have a Jewish friend living with me. He has an intellectual belief in non-violence. But he says he cannot pray for Hitler... I do not quarrel with him over his anger. He wants to be non-violent, but the suffering of his fellow Jews is too much for him to bear. What is true of him is true of thousands of Jews who have no thought of even 'loving the enemy.' With them, as with millions, 'revenge is sweet, to forgive is divine.'"

Kallenbach died in March 1945, and bequeathed his money to the Zionist Organization, an act which Gandhi persuaded him to take. His body was cremated in Johannesburg in a Reform ceremony that agitated the Jewish community. Ironically, the Indians who came to participate in the funeral were denied entrance and had to make do with standing by the door.

In 1952, Kallenbach's ashes were brought to Israel and buried near A. D. Gordon's grave in Degania, the Zionist pioneer ideologist who advocated the concept of "Religion of Labor," or as Gandhi and Tolstoy termed it, "Bread Labor." This concept was practiced devotedly by Kallenbach and Gandhi in Tolstoy Farm half a century ago.

Conclusion

As it was mentioned in the beginning, it is impossible to understand Gandhi without understanding his relationships with those close to him. Between 1906 and 1909, Gandhi underwent an extremely significant transformation, which solidified his doctrine and incorporated the most vital components into his political philosophy. His partner and most intimate friend during these crucial years was Herman Kallenbach.

Kallenbach was the practical man, an administrator with many talents and the one responsible for Gandhi's contact with the South African Indian population. He was the person Gandhi trusted implicitly; he was an important financial supporter without whom Gandhi could not have managed his struggle. Kallenbach was an ideal partner for spiritual experiments and extreme diets. He also was Gandhi's confidante: Gandhi complained to him about marital problems and sent his children to him in times of crisis. But above all, Gandhi and Kallenbach were intimate soulmates, who were busy with spiritual growth in the molding periods of their lives. Their friendship was characterized by mutual efforts towards personal moral-spiritual development

and a common deep commitment to the Indian Struggle. Their relationship began with an attempt to live Tolstoyan lives, including the special characteristics Gandhi added to them in South Africa, and ended with a renewed and significant meeting, in which Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence was tested to its utmost extremity by the unprecedented evil of Nazism. Gandhi stuck to his position that even Hitler's heart would melt in a *Satyagraha* struggle, but the Jewish and Zionist Kallenbach could no longer accept this and was in conflict on this issue.

Kallenbach and Gandhi both viewed their unique relationship as the most beautiful period of their lives, especially the Tolstoy Farm period. Their outstanding bonding can set an example for cross-cultural encounters, alongside with the openness for other people. It emphasized the role which individuals can play, willing to go against the prevalent political current, and doing so may have much greater outcomes than any one can imagine. Importantly, this amazing story started in Rusnė, Lithuania, which since recently is also a home to the unique Gandhi-Kallenbach sculpture – the only one in the world featuring the two soulmates together. The cross-cultural aspects of the Gandhi-Kallenbach relationship combine Lithuania, South Africa, India and Israel, and traverse the dramatic events of the first half of the 20th century. They also provide an immense capital to build on in the future.

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