

Gandhi's philosophy of Non-violence

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ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to explore Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi was the pioneer leader of Indian nationalist in British ruled in India. He employed non-violence, civil disobedience, led India to independence and inspired movement for civil right to freedom across the world. Gandhian philosophy is connected to many disciplines like education, international relation, history, peace and conflict economic etc. The concept of non-violence is one of the most comprehensive, accepted and largely advocated philosophy in recent times. Mahatma Gandhi's **Non-violence** is to highlight his views and to relate it with his ethical concept and his philosophy of Non-violence. All people desire to live in a world of peace and harmony. The main aim of the Gandhian philosophy to create an emanation of peace and harmony by ahimsa or non-violence in the world. Gandhian philosophy and thoughts are relevant in the changing world of today and can help in difficult time, and the philosophy is also needed for global peace.

Key words; *Non-violence, philosophy, peace, ethics,*

“Nonviolence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages.

Few persons in their life time aroused stronger emotions than Mahatma Gandhi respect on his achievement and the integrity of his character are part of our civilization. Mahatma Gandhi continues to live with us because he represents a certain ageless moral quest of the universal man. Before one can fully understand his concept of non-violence it is essential to bear in mind the philosophic background of the concept. Through his life and teachings Gandhi bears testimony to the values for which on country stood for ages. He had mystic faith in truth. Life is eternal was against evil to be fought under the banner of truth and non-violence. Gandhi believed in the authority of spirit that can bring unity and salvation of mankind. Non-violence for Gandhi is soul force. Gandhi's non-violence is based on the higher aspects of human nature which rebels against tyranny, injustice and authoritarianism Gandhi stood for peace and human freedom.

For Gandhi non-violence involves an inner struggle which requires us to defeat fears, greed, anger, and guilt. Truth and nonviolence constitute the central core of Gandhi's message. There has been apostle of nonviolence but Gandhi's uniqueness his to projecting these starting personal moral virtues on the wider fields

of collective socio-political life and action. The idea of non-violence has been in the cultural history of our country from the beginning non-violence has been declared highest values in Bhagwad Gita laws of Manu enjoin, let him not insult anybody. Against an angry man let him not in return show anger. “(Laws of Manu). In 500 B.C, Gautam the Buddha gave the world an extra ordinarily great personal example of total commitment to the non-violent way of life. Buddha lays. “The force of arms cannot do what peace does”. How Gandhi distinguished between the negative and positive meanings of Ahimsa which is Gandhi’s contribution.

Thus, Gandhi extended the meaning of Ahimsa beyond were non injuring to human as well animal life plant life non-violence is moral force. Gandhi life was an experiment with truth and non-violence. Non-violence of Gandhi provides a motive force for social change and the dynamics for the struggle towards revolutionary transformation. His concept of non-violence is to bring harmony. It is of love. Love begets love war begets war. Violence begets violence. Violence increases inequality and non-violence bring equality thus truth and non-violence meant to him the emancipation of man the reawakening of his inner self and the pursuit of collective prosperity. It is one of the tragedies of history that the greatest exponents of non-violence died as a result of violence. Christ died on the cross. Gandhi was assassinated and also martin Luther king. Is non-violence then an empty dream for were defective philosophy which conceals the resentful passion which conceals the individual and the nations? This is not true ceases dead is more powerful than ceases alive. The death of Gandhi has brought into existence a philosophy which is not only the basis of statecraft to our own country but has influenced people all over the world. While waging the war of liberation Gandhi actively worked for masses. Khadi and other village industries, communal unity, removal of untouchability, adult education, village sanitation and propagation of Hindi were some of the items of the programme. For all these goals there was a way of truth and non-violence with regard to the fundamental questions of philosophy, Gandhi took the position of objective idealism. The world according to him was real and existed objectively independent of human consciousness. He had unshakeable faith in God. He considered non-violence or ahimsa as the highest form of ethics. Gandhi’s non-violence is based on the higher aspects of human nature which rebel against tyranny, injustice and authoritarianism. The values derive from the hearts and wills of men. Gandhi believes in the tremendous urge of human nature for peace and freedom. The society which he aims at, is already universally present in the hearts of men though it may lie submerged. We have to bring it to the surface by fighting the evil forces. political, social and psychological. For Gandhi non-violence involves an inner struggle which requires us to defeat fear, greed and guilt. A great personality challenges the spirit in us and reminds us that we are not

just animals but human beings. Gandhi's purpose was to advance man's progress towards a rational world order. He advocated that we must direct the evolutionary process towards the goal of a world without fear, without hate and without war. Gandhi is the immortal advocate of fulfilment of love and understanding in a world with hatred torn by misunderstanding. Revealing the central theme of his life as the passionate of spirituality, Gandhi wrote: "What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain moksha. I live and move and my being in pursuit of this goal. AH that I do by way of speaking and writing and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this same end.

Truth and non-violence constitute the central core of Gandhi's message, and what is imperishable in it. There have been in history, apostles of non-violence, but Gandhi's uniqueness lies to projecting these sterling personal moral virtues on the wider fields of collective socio-political life and action. The idea of Non-violence has been present in the cultural history of our ancient land from the beginning. We have it in prayers, philosophical speculations, commandments, poetry and epics. In the Bhagwad Gita Ahimsa is declared as a superior virtue. Laws of Manu enjoin: "Let him patiently hear hard, words, let him not insult anybody, against an angry man let him not in return show anger. Let him bless when he is cursed. In 500 B.C. Gautam, the Buddha gave the world an extraordinarily great personal example of total commitment to the non-violent way of life. Buddha taught: The commitment to non-violence involves both self-discipline and self-renunciation. When we come to Jainism, we find self-discipline carried to a greater extreme. Gandhi's early years were spent in Gujarat where Jainism was very strong, and he and his family came heavily under its influence. In Jainism we read:

As early as 1916 Gandhi distinguished between the negative and the positive meanings of Ahimsa thus: "In its negative form it 'means not injuring any living being whether by body or mind. I may not, therefore, hurt the person of any wrongdoing or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental suffering...Ahimsa requires deliberate self-suffering and not a deliberate injuring...In its positive form Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger as I would love my wrongdoing father or son. This active Ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.

Thus, Gandhi extended the meaning of Ahimsa beyond mere non-injury. The path of Ahimsa is the path of non-attachment and entails continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience: It implies not merely a certain attitude of detached sympathy toward an enemy, but also the denial of the very existence of an enemy.

Although Gandhi was inspired by the great tradition of Ahimsa in India, he spent a lifetime elaborating rational structure for his faith. He reasoned that nonviolence arouses the best in others, that apparent good from violence is temporary while the evil is permanent. He reasoned after the New Testament that in fighting one side or the other loses, while in the nonviolent way there is the possibility that both sides may win. Tolstoy reasoned that life lost through nonviolent resistance is a fraction of that lost in violent revolutions.

The supporting reasons for nonviolence are:

- (a) Love is the source and end of life and the Law of human race.
- (b) What is possible for some men should be possible for all, human nature being the same.
- (c) The effects of nonviolence are more lasting and enduring.
- (d) Nonviolence is a moral force.

Non-violence of Gandhi provides a motive force for social change and the dynamics for the struggle towards revolutionary transformation. His concept of nonviolence was that of harmony and not of conflict. It was of love and service and not of profit and competition. It was a new rationale for change. Gandhi asserted: 'Violence is bred by inequality, nonviolence by equality.' Thus, truth and nonviolence meant to him the emancipation of man, the reawakening of his inner self and the pursuit of collective prosperity.

Even though it is generally conceived that the relation between nonviolence and truth is that of means and end, I do not think that it is necessarily so. If we insisted on considering nonviolence as a means, we would be degrading nonviolence and reducing it to an instrumental role. Of course, nonviolence can be a means, but it is much more than that. It is love, and love for Gandhi is the supreme reality. That is why between reality, love and nonviolence one cannot make any discriminatory separation in the absolute sense. On the contrary, one must find an absolute ontological identity. One can derive Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence from his two metaphysical concepts.

1. One is fallibilism, the notion that you can be mistaken as regards the facts of a situation or your inner voice. It is your duty to abstain from violence because the one that you injure may be right and you may be wrong.

2. The other is the ontological concept of truth or 'What really is'¹. According to Gandhi we are all ultimately one. Therefore, if I injure you, I am injuring myself; I limit my capacity for self-realization as much as your occasion for self-realization.

The idea of nonviolence is the one that is meant to become incarnate. It must be echoed in all situations and find in all circumstances a certain characteristic mode of action.

In conclusion, I would like to submit that in the storm of annihilating material power, a great spiritual responsibility rests on India. Writing in his book, "One World and India", Arnold Toynbee says: "But you have incurred a rather formidable obligation both to Gandhiji and to history – I mean the obligation to go on setting an Indian example of non-violence to rest of the world. If India were ever to fail to live up to this India ideal which is the finest and therefore, the most exacting, legacy, in your Indian heritage, it would be a poor lookout for a mankind as a whole". And in Gandhiji's own words, "The highest honour that friends can do me is to enforce in own lives the programme that I stand for, or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it. There may be some kind of failure in Gandhi, as it is with every human being. But to speak of total failure of him has no meaning. Gandhi may have lost a battle but Gandhi's war is not lost, and it must not be allowed to be lost.

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