



Gandhi's non-violent legacy and world security

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Abstract

This research paper explores how Gandhi's notion of nonviolence presents the key essence of humanism. His faith in humanism is total and unequivocal. Gandhi defeated the deep rooted and prolonged British Raj in India without using violence against the colonizer. He was a staunch follower of nonviolence. His non-violent legacy helped India succeed in getting freedom and gaining independence. His teaching of non-violent movement reveals a sacred bond of unity and friendship between the literate and illiterate people. Gandhi's philosophy of simple living and high thinking is an example-setter and a source of inspiration to mankind all over the world. Such philosophy is possible only when people follow the path of nonviolence. There is neither peace and tranquility nor even victory and accomplishment when one gets bogged down in the quagmire of violence. The path of nonviolence leads people towards the enlightenment whereas the path of violence leads to darkness. Gandhi's nonviolent movement has been a fair teaching for the sake of justice and freedom not only for the people of Hindustan from the brutal British Raj but also it was a beacon of hope for the people all over the world. While violence breeds fear and hatred, there is solemnity, peace and prosperity in the path of nonviolence. While violence shortens life, nonviolence prolongs it. Gandhi empowered people through nonviolence and succeeded in defeating the followers of violent means and practices.

Keywords: bogged down, propagate, non-violence approach, message, faith and truth

Introduction

Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi was a visionary messenger of nonviolence. He was principally a practical idealist. His loyal stenographer, Miss Schlesin says to him "I am not here to draw a salary from you, I am here because I like to work with you and I like your ideals" [2]. Gandhi believed in "works and duty rather than in the belief of rishis and saints" [9]. He was spiritually higher than the people of his time. He had a sharp knowledge about the wage and consequence about the violence and nonviolence. He had a short of transparent knowledge which easily differed the spiritual and physical might viz for power. Gandhi believed that dignity of man sustains longer only when he believes in spiritual power. Gandhi's sense of morality was assimilated to the nature of rishis and saints like the poet laureate, Rabindranath Tagore's spirituality and their search for knowledge was similar too. Ramchandra Guha portrays that "the concept of Tagore's ideas on Gandhi and Nehru has perhaps been given less attention than it deserves. It was through the poet's provocation that these two men developed a theory of nationalism that was inclusive, not exclusive; a nationalism that sought not just political freedom of the Nation but equal rights for all its citizens" (*introduction, IV*). Guha mentions that the notion of Nehru's letter which "completed this course of personal instruction invoked the stirring lines from *Gitanjali* which begin Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, and end 'Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake'"(65). They practised the path of nonviolence to make individuals or nations prosperous and enriched.

Gandhi's non-violent approach is equally relevant and necessary in the present world as well, especially at a time when weapons of mass destruction are creating havoc and

raising the fear of another world war. Ghoshroy narrates: "The world today is facing a severe existential crisis due to the irresponsible behaviour of human beings. The relationship between ecology and humanity is getting eroded, and concerns have been raised worldwide" [3]. We need to avert such a war at any cost because the next world war, if it ever breaks out, will eliminate humanity from the surface of the world. So, we need to propagate the message of Gandhi's non-violent approach with full vigour in the present world torn by conflict, discord and violence.

Ahimsa

Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi was the true follower of ahimsa. The word, 'himsa' (violence) goes against the word ahimsa (nonviolence), so the way of himsa pollutes the grain and then so to our brain too. Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence taught people not to cultivate the power to commit violence (himsa). His firm "faith in truth led him to obtain the faith of the masses" (17). Mahadev Desai sheds light on Gandhi's experiment of truth as seen in his autobiography below:

I must not devote any more chapters here to a description of the further progress of Khadi. It would be outside the scope of these chapters to give a history of my various activities after they came before the public eye, and I must not attempt it, if only because to do so would require a treatise on the subject. My object in writing these chapters is simply to describe how certain things, as it were spontaneously, presented themselves to me in the course of my experiments with truth (398).

It is because of that faith in truth that he confidently assured the people all over the world.

Gandhi stumbled at many places in the search of "truth by

relentlessly following out his faith in nonviolence”⁽³⁵⁾. But he did not find any great and stable stake of truth in the company of most distinguished circles. He had made several mistakes in the course of searching a fair and real life. Gandhi learned lesson of nonviolence from his illiterate and innocent wife, Kasturba Gandhi. She never escaped with her duty towards her womanly culture. He at first tried to bend her on his own will and command. His wife had to act according to his order, but she never excused his command. Her commitment and determined resistance to her husband gave him a kind of such lesson which he found himself as if he was only born to keep her in his order. Gandhi learned this lesson as if she were his teacher in nonviolence. Gandhi said to himself that “If I should be pleased to be faithful to my wife, she should be pleased to be faithful to me”^[6]. Doctrines of Gandhi’s teachings did not remain just as a belief or saying because they sensitized to act as submission. He applied such doctrine in his daily action and routine. K. P. Thakur, the former principal of R. D. S. College Muzaffarpur, India punctuates that “Gandhijee, the Father of the Nation, lived a simple life”^[8]. Neither had he suggested anybody to accept his belief as a knot of proverb nor did he force to do as well. He acted as if a norm followed nonviolently and happily as well.

Nonviolence character

Human beings know the essence of both violence and nonviolence too, because of their rational quality. According to Gandhi’s philosophy, violence is brute, rude, cruel and finite whereas nonviolence teaches the lesson of gentleness, mildness and infinity. Nonviolence has infinite room whereas violence has limit and finite room and space. Nonviolent fruit is superior to brutal fruit. The edge of nonviolence protects self respect and sense of humour. Nonviolence does not assist in ill tempered nature, immoral and unfair act. It also empowers our inner, mental as well as physical power to face the violent armed men. The legacy of nonviolence is held in the “hands of all children, men and women”⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. Their soul is equal like a living faith in the vary nature of God of Love. While nonviolence is accepted “as the law of life, it pervades all beings, but it is not applied to the isolated acts”⁽²¹⁾. It is absolutely wrong to say that nonviolence is only for individuals, not for mankind. A true and faithful person has the right in nonviolence as the obstinate and brute has in the violence. Nonviolence is as sharp as the razor’s blade. According to Gandhi, the practice of nonviolence is more than “the practice of physical exercise”⁽⁴⁷⁾. Bodily exercise sustains our health whereas nonviolence sustains our soul.

Gandhi and religion

Today, nonviolence should be kept above all religions which try to divide people on sectarian line. There are several lovers of nonviolence well respected even after their death too. The Hindu people claim Gandhi’s self made faith over nonviolence proved that “his self made faith was very close to all religions in the world”⁽⁹⁰⁾. His thought of religion is quite similar to the thought bound in the Gita. Other religious scriptures too converge on the issue of avoiding evil deeds that lead to unpleasant consequences. Science and technology emerged along with the development of human being but they are not above the command of human’s permission. The misuse of science and technology deadens our status quo while we forget

the spiritual reality of our knowledge. Solely, Gandhi’s teaching of religion is farfetched knowledge of modern science and technology. Gandhi’s system is different in view of “answering the anger and hatred by love and violence by nonviolence”⁽²⁵⁰⁾. He did not believe in physical power because he was a staunch follower of the spiritual soul. Desai, further, remarks that Gandhi’s idea of non-co-operation movement is soulfully stated in the excerpt below:

To resume, then, the story of the non-co-operation movement started during the imperial rule in India. Whilst the powerful Khilafat agitation set up by the Ali Brothers was in full progress, I had long discussions on the subject with the late Maulana Abhul Bari and the other Ulema, especially, with regard to the extent to which a Musalman could observe the rule of non-violence. In the end they all agreed that Islam did not forbid its followers from following non-violence as a policy, and further, that, while they were pledged to that policy, they were bound faithfully to carry it out. At last the non-co-operation resolution was moved in the Khilafat conference, and carried after prolonged deliberations. I have a vivid recollection how once at Allahabad a committee sat all night deliberating upon the subject. In the beginning the late Hakim Saheb was sceptical as to the practicability of non-violent non-co-operation. But after his scepticism was overcome he threw himself into it heart and soul, and his help proved invaluable to the movement^[1].

The philosophy of nonviolent resistance says that “the nonviolent resister does not perpetrate the violent resister”⁽¹⁶⁰⁾. The nonviolent resister seeks solution to the perpetration of the violent resister. Nonviolence speaks against the violent and evil action.

Conclusion

The important value of nonviolence is to get over the fact that “we do not intend to humiliate or defeat the oppressor group, but to win the friendship and understanding”⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. For instance, Martin Luther King Jr. set nonviolent movement before white people not to defeat or humiliate the white community. He had started his revolution to win the friendship of all people who had perpetrated this system in the past. The end and aftermath of nonviolence is bitterness. It is like a creation of the beloved community of nonviolence. It is said that boycott of any oppressors never redeems within itself. If nonviolence is merely a means to the excitement sense of shame within the oppressor, the end is reconciliation and redemption. The nonviolent system seeks to fight with evil system rather than individuals who happen to be unknown to the good system viz. for pure and pious acknowledgement. The struggle of nonviolence is rather between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, between. If there is victory it will not be the victory merely for people. But it will be a victory for justice, a victory for good will and a victory for independence.

We have to get over this matter that nonviolence is not merely an external means to fight against the oppressor group. We need to realize that nonviolence avoids both external and internal misconception. It plays a central role through the help of love and goodwill. The concept of Gandhi’s love isn’t mere a persuasion of disarmament. Luther speaks the same language

that the meaning of love and goodwill in the highest sense of judgment is not a sentiment. But it is the balance between justice and injustice or a balance between peace and war. Gandhi's commitment to freedom and nonviolence is vital for the security of human beings at this hour of crisis emerging in the world.

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