

GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

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The life of mahatma gandhi whether political, social or economical, was influenced by spirituality, gandhiji led Indian freedom struggle through the tools of truth (satya), non-violence (Ahinsa) and passive resistance (satyagraha). He never abandoned any of his principles In this respected gandhiji's non-violence (Ahinsa) is such a strength which acts as an inspiration. Through the concept of non-violence is prevalent in India since the ancient period, yet the credit of initiating gandhiji towards non-violence goes to leo Tolstoy gandhiji himself has said that Tolstoy's book which influenced him most was kingdom of god is within you It implies that god lives within your heart. He said about this influence, "I was violent at the time of leaving for abroad, believed in violence and disbelieved in non-violence. But after reading this book my disbelief was eroded.¹

Raychandbhai and rusbin also left a deep impact on gandhiji's life.² As a result of these influences once gandhiji understood the concept of non-violence he incorporated it in every aspect of his life. Ahinsa is defined by gandhiji as. Ahinsa is a solemnpledge. It is more difficult than walking on a award. It can be actually practiced only in a very limited since by am individual Intense asceticism and deep knowledge is required to practice Ahinsa in its true sense.³

Only Ahinsa beads to straight and simplest way towards truth and god.⁴ Ahinsa is life time of truth without Ahinsa human is an animal.⁵ " Ahinsa is a fierce weapon. It has extreme courage It is the grace of brave, his ultimate treasure. It does not belong to coward. It is animate object and not dry, insipid and inert. It is a special quality of soul.⁶ Ahinsa is viewed from different perspectives in these definitions. It is being called a solemn pledge, a fierce weapon, life time of truth ultimate way to achieve truth and a complete concept in itself Ahinsa lacks malice towards individual because it is malicious through only that give rise to violent tendencies. Violence, according to gandhiji, was committed not only by actions but by through also. In the books ' Ahinsa' it is written, "In this world, all living beings are equal, to hurt any one of them is violence Even a thought of hurting them is an act of violence.⁷ Roughly most of the people believe that not harming anyone is Ahinsa but according to gandhiji it is only an apparent meaning of Ahinsa is much more comprehensive principle. "Malicious through is violence, hastiness is violence, false speech is violence

and so is hoarding am object request by the majority In Ahinsa, as propagated by gandhiji, ideological caution is very important, so is the control over speech and communication. It is expected that while fulfilling the needs of life one should show considerable restraint. This it is related to mind speech and action.⁸

Besides these negative meanings of Ahinsa, gandhiji describes it emotionally as, active have and extensive pity.⁹ Roman Rola has described it as. infinite patience and unlimited love.¹⁰ From this point of view anger, hatred, revenge etc are alien with the concept of Ahinsa because all these are indirect from of violence. Together Ahinsa and hatred cannot find place is our heart.¹¹ This is emotional interpretation of Ahinsa which incorporates Mahatama Buddha's pity and compassion, mahavira's compassion and happiness, and Hindussims stress on mercy towards creatures Every religion accepts the existence of soul in all living beings, this any type of violence is irreligious. Love in the from of Ahinsa is the genesis of all virtues. The arisen of compassion sympathy, benevolence, tolerance pity etc lies in love only. Therefore gandhiji has said that without Ahinsa you cannot practice truth also.

According to gandhiji, man cannot for a moment live without consciously or unconsciously committing outward hinsa (violence). The very fact of his living eating, drinking and morning about necessarily involves same hinsa (violence), destruction of life, be it ever so minute. There are three reasons for this violence.¹³

1. Personal interest - The violence committed in the process of eating etc has personal interest because it provides strength to our body. 2. Violence committed for the betterment of an individual of If a wound is aggravated, then doctor will operate it to cure the infected part. This can not be termed as violence as the doctor has operate the infected part so that this infection does not spread to other parts of the body.

Among these three above mentioned cases, first two are cases of violence necessitated by needs. If one leaves eating so that he became non-violent or leaves violent animals alive to move about freely, then it will be problematic situation. This these cases refer to violence. But in the third case, there is no violence. As the alleged 'violence' committed has no interest to the person who committed it. On the contrary, vio-

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lence is committed to provide relief to the individual.

It was the experience of gandhiji that the solution of all the problems of human relations live in Ahinsa Ahinsa or non-violence is more powerful than Ahinsa or violence. Ahinsa led towards love and respect for each other and impairs to treat all human beings as equal. gandhiji experimented with truth and Ahinsa in all circumstances and was able to success over hatred and doubts. Ahinsa propagated by gandhiji was not just negative concept but was of legislative power. This concept teaches us to win evil with virtue. has no feeling of revenge, has no place for conspiracy, reaction and has not secret murder or organized war as its principles. According to gandhiji the search for end 'Truth' must be based on moral principles and this could be achieved through names of 'Ahinsa' only thus Ahinsa is fundamental to satyagraha. Truth is supreme law while Ahinsa is supreme duty. like truth the strength of Ahinsa is unlimited.

In regard with Ahinsa and Truth gandhiji has said that truth is supreme religion and Ahimsa is supreme duty. An individual can worship truth only by fulfilling this duty repeatedly. In other words, 'truth' is an end while Ahinsa is a mean.¹⁴ In this world, it there is any other active power after truth, than it is Ahinsa only according to gandhiji, "Truth is legislator while Ahinsa is prohibitory. Truth is witness of an object. Ahinsa prohibits an object even after its proven existence truth is there but untruth is not. Violence is there but non-violence (Ahinsa) is not Even then Ahinsa should be pursued this is real religion truth is itself a proven thing its complete result in Ahinsa which is hidden in truth only Ahinsa is not apparent as truth is from this violent world, the interviewer of truth ascetic gandhiji has picked up Ahinsa and described it as, "Violence is delusory and an illusion Ahinsa is the only truth continence (brahemacharya), non-stealing and non-hoarding are for Ahinsa only they proves Ahinsa, which is life-time of truth without it a man is only an animal."¹⁵

According to gandhiji, Ahinsa signifies supreme moral and spiritual, It can be of three type enlightened Ahinsa, purposeful Ahinsa and cowards Ahinsa Enlightened Ahinsa is one which arsis naturally from soul An individual adheres to it because of morality or purity of his inner thoughts such Ahinsa has the power to make impossible, possible Purposeful Ahinsa is one which is adopted as a policy due to special needs in any field of life. Though it is ascribed to work individual get if followed with honesty and resoluteness then it can very prove to be powerful and fruitful coward is Ahinsa is a friend of timid and weak individual It is am inactive Ahinsa cowardice and Ahinsa like fire and water cannot live together.¹⁶ Without fearlessness

and self-will, there can be no Ahinsa.¹⁷ It has not place for the feeling of revenge and possess the feeling of pardon. Revenge signifies weakness while pardon is a garland of heroes self willed individual can only grant pardon. It this way gandhiji introduced heroism in the traditional nation of Ahinsa He clarifies that during non-violent apportion we are not opposing violence but struggling against weakness for weak individual there is not meaning of in virtue and religious unreligious.¹⁸ Heroic war is much letter than cowardly peace Inauspicious and non-align clear unrest in much better than unmanly and pseudo peace & sorrow. Peace without strength is not peace at all infect it is cowardice and dependence of first quality thus Ahinsa is not a cowardly surrender against earl, infect it active aggressive and influential tool for opposing evil and unjust a Throughout his life gandhiji opposed injustice.¹⁹ He never surrendered in front of any immorality. He even never bowed in front of any injustice and kept opposing it without fearing for his life. Therefore gandhiji stressed that Ahinsa and cowardice cannot go together. He even said that from cowardice violence is much better.²⁰ He asserted that it required to chose from cowardice and violence he would definitely chose violence and instead of cowardly watching annihilation he would welcome destructive war.²¹ We can conclude that there is not Ahinsa for a weak individual.

Ahinsa is quality of fearless person and we cannot define it as inactive weak and dependent therefore gandhiji has said that were there is no preparation for last non-violent sacrifice, then self-defense is the only viable there is no place for surrender or defeat in Ahinsa it is absurd to discuss about violence non-violence in case of a female whose modesty has been violated repeatedly her arm should be self-defense and presence her modesty Any method could be used in such cases god has given us teeth and nose which can be used in such cases In short she should use her complete straight to defend her and even sacrifice her life.²² The Ahinsa of gandhiji is so extensive that no violence can stand without taking help of it. Violence is deformed and displaced shape of Ahinsa, if we look into greatest violent revolutions of the world istory, we will found that they were fought for the sake of Ahinsa & violence was accepted and applied where there is a feeling to remove problems of other and where an individual or group of individuals of others and where an individual or group of individuals is hurt by the exploitation of helpless, there only such individuals led violent revolutions to remove violence and exportation committed against these explorted people In other words, violence is not completely independent and different from Ahinsa. It

is a deformed and incorrect application of Ahinsa. The success visible in such violent revolutions is because in their origin lies Ahinsa and deeper the feeling of Ahinsa will be lesser violence will be used. In other words, the permanent success and happiness that we can earn for ourselves and over society depends on how much larger non-violent aim is there or how pure and extensive its nature is.²³

The Ahinsa of gandhiji is not a tool of extra-worldly peace or salvation only but also a tool for social peace, maintenance of political system, religious understanding not family bonding.²⁴ It is a divine light of an individual's heart. gandhiji never got tried of saying that, "The divine light of man's heart can be hidden under a cover of as but it cannot be extinguished and even between violent incidents the rule of Ahinsa continues to work. We have seen during the discussion of vedic tradition that most of the Hindu religious texts does not consider violence committed during steals (Yojna) as violence. But according to gandhiji, this is a half truth and not complete violence is not dependent on circumstances²⁵ or the end, it will remain violence only and cannot be defended by calling it as Ahinsa But reality has more privilege than concepts thus any violence declared as compulsory, either it is pardoned or even taken into the category of virtue this rule is applied in the case of rituals where the violence committed is declared as compulsory there fore it is termed in religious text as pure and virtuous. But compulsory according to country and circumstances life the reliance committed in the process of defending a weak body of burning stick during winters in which many lives are billed, can be turned as compulsory violence but is summers when there is no need if you kill lives by burning sticks, it cannot be termed as compulsory.

Agriculture is a pure ritual (Yajna) and real kindness In a lesson of 'Nov Jeevan' gandhiji has as bed, raising doubts about this, "When you are hurt on killing even a ant and in agriculture you kill thousands of insects, in such situation how you could you continue doing agriculture? Why can't we earn our livelihood by begging alms or indulging in any other trade? gandhiji himself gives answer to this He says that there is not doubt that during the process of agriculture numerous lives are killed but we cannot imagine that during the process of inhaling exhaling breath also numerous minute insects are killed. This the manner in which breathing is compulsory, agriculture is also compulsory those who wish to beg leaving agriculture are on the wrong foot . If some are wishes to indulge in trade then he must know that even in these activities violence is committed like in the case of silk in which silk worms are killed we cannot compare ag-

riculturalists, who try to save insects as much as possible, with those people who never gave a thought about those insects who are killed below their feet. Agriculturalists are soft spoken people on whom the whole world is depended. Agriculture is an important and pure ritual done by religious people.²⁶

Despite his all idealism gandhiji is rews are mainly practical through out his life gandhiji tried for ideal non-violent order and every one should try to achieve the ideal situation until, as in the words of Toyenbee, "Violence lives the field for non-violence by destroying itself" Although gandhiji was aware of the fact that human being with his mortal body cannot completely adhere to non-violence.

Gandhiji believed in higher and lower grouping in life He had faith in purity of life. He never through of any such society where there is not agriculture and in which insects are killed.²⁷ The gandhiji's view on Ahinsa has manifold dimensions. According to him as, violence take birth in human mind, so is no non-violence. Ahinsa can be complete only when mental, physical and vocal dimensions are added to it. The mental field we should have liberal, extensive and many dimensional vision.²⁸ Truth has many faces. Our knowledge has limitations and thus we cannot know everything. In this situation if we consider ourselves to be the only enlightened one then it will be violence and obstinacy. In Bible also, it is written that, "In the home of our father, there is many buildings" this means that in the field of knowledge and thought if we consider ourselves to be the only enlightened one then we are showing vanity and foolishness. Therefore to practice Ahinsa, we should have multi dimensional vision.

For Gandhiji, Ahinsa was not an individual's religion but a path for spiritual and political conduct for society and individual.²⁹ According to him, the practice of Ahinsa is bigger than 'swaraja'. If you follow Ahinsa, then it must be considered supreme as then only it will become unobstructable.³⁰

In this manner Gandhiji considered Ahinsa as world's most active strength. For him Ahinsa was the sum total of all social virtues.³¹ In a society of all humans have good faith for each other than no individual or group will commit any injustice. The society built on this basis will have peace, balance and uniformity. This is the ideal society of Gandhiji thus for Gandhiji Ahinsa has extensive meaning and is defined in a new manner.

He said that, "from an individual who claims to be non-violent, it is that he will not show any contempt even towards a person who hurts him. He will tolerate everything. In this complete removal of ill feeling towards all living-beings³² is Ahinsa. In its progressive sense, it means tolerance of pain. In its active

sense, it is good faith towards all living beings. Ahinsa is not for saints and ascetics only but for common men also. It is sum total of the concept of spiritual unity. It is based on the fact that what is good for one, is also good for rest of the world. The Ahinsa of Gandhiji does not make us coward and eunuch. It is not a cover for cowardice but best virtue of a brave man. According to him revenge is much better than inactiveness and mere surrender. It is not symbolic of idleness rather it is symbolic of progressiveness and achallings for injustice.

Gandhiji through his practical use of Ahinsa in his life showed that it is symbol of self-will and a worthy weapon. Ahinsa should not be confined to personal behaviour only but applied to every situation in human life. Gandhiji preached Ahinsa of manifold dimensions for the removal of all human problems and woes. He said that, "Ahinsa is most active power in the world, greatest and best rule available".

After accepting Ahinsa as his religion, Gandhiji never felt helpless in his words, "Hardest metal also melts in appropriate temperature. In the same manner, in front of the heat generated by Ahinsa, strongest

heart also melts and the ability of Ahinsa to produced heat is unlimited."

According to Gandhiji, fire-order for Ahinsa is that even after provocation for becoming violent, a person thinks and behave non-violently. Ahinsa is most powerful among all texts of the world and therefore human race can be saved by it only. Ahinsa expects real humility because it is depended on the will of Almighty-the god.

Gandhiji gave practical dimensions to the Ahinsa propogated by Mahavira. After Mahavira, Gandhiji was the only person who gave Ahinsa a conceptual look. He thought that it is a undestructible weapon for our lord gorang has tanks, commons, army etc but we lack these. Gandhiji adopted Ahinsa in his life and declared it to be a rector for all human being. Mahavir preached Ahinsa for a religions field. Gandhiji gave practical knowledge for adopting Ahinsa in the field of state. Gandhiji sacrificed his life but never left Ahinsa till the very last word uttered by him - 'Rama'.

In this way Gandhiji applied Ahinsa practically in his life and adopted its social, political and economical aspects.

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