

**GANDHI'S LEGACY OF SATYAGRAHA AND SELF REALIZATION: A
BRIEF ESTIMATE**

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Abstract

Gandhi returned for India on 9th January in 1915 from South Africa. Gandhi noticed the status of the Indians is like the South African Indians. At that moment, British Government applied their theory and politics in Indian society and a handful educated Indians were protesting against the British power in disunited. There was no communication among the Indian leaders and not in touch with the masses. As a result, Indian National Leaders were isolated from the masses. Gandhi had seen the same scenario in South Africa. He travelled in different parts in India and contacted with the local leaders and also the peoples in any level of the society. He organized Champaran peasant movement in favour of the Indigo-planters in 1917 and associated with the workers in Ahmadabad in 1918. He united the farmers of Kheda district in Gujarat to remission of taxes in 1918. Gandhi organized Non-cooperation movement during the year of 1920-22 with the Indian National Congress. At that moment, he turned as spokesman of the Indian National Congress. The Indian Congress to be led by Gandhi then. Thus he became a pioneer leader of the Indian National Congress.

Keywords: Gandhi's Legacy, Satyagraha, Self Realization, Ahimsa, Tapasya etc.

Introduction:

The practical application of non-violence in the form of a Satyagraha is a new feature. It is applicable to all walks of life, especially to fight evil and injustice on a large scale. Satyagraha symbolizes love or identity of interest and sacrifice for the good and welfare of all including the low lest of the law and the poorest of the poor. Gandhi evolved the new way of non-violent resistance by living it as well as preaching it. Satyagraha as a way of life and means of special change was ever growing and there was no end to it. For Gandhi it was a quest for truth which was transcendental as well as immanent. The main function of a Satyagraha is to find,

understand, experience and express the truth. Gandhi identified himself with the sufferings of humanity and thereby he realized that to serve man was to serve God.

A Satyagrahi is pilgrim to the shrine of truth. 'Ahimsa' and love guide him to attain truth. He purifies his mind and rises above pettiness and meanness of life in order to get blessing of the deity of truth. A Satyagraha has to identify him with the truth of the situation. He has to awaken within himself that power of truth which far stronger than the physical force. This power he has to utilize for the practical welfare of humanity. Gandhi's life is a running commentary on Satyagraha. According to Gandhi there is a fundamental difference between passive resistance and Satyagraha. The former is static the latter is dynamic. Satyagraha is positive action. The votary of 'Satyagraha' suffers cheerfully because he is inspired by love for a true cause. On the other hand passive resistance is a negative action and the part cant in it suffers reluctantly because he is not inspired by any noble principle.ⁱ He desists from violent because he has no means of violence. Unavoidable circumstances compel him to resort to non-violent means passive resistance. He is not motivated by love for a genuine cause but by feelings of latent revenge. According to Gandhi soul force which is far superior to physical force is the main agent in 'Satyagraha'. Satyagraha aims at doing against evil. Not only does it resist evil in a non-violent way, but it also does well in return for evil. It is a positive and active form of resistance and therefore, it resorts to direct action against evil.ⁱⁱ

Ahimsa and Satyagraha:

The first and foremost characteristic of 'Satyagraha' is Ahimsa. It implies that the opponent should be treated with utmost respect. According to Joan Bondurant, "*Satyagraha* becomes something more than a method of resistance to particular legal norms; it became an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change...." A 'Satyagraha' attacks not the opponent but the principles, policies and actions attributed to him. According to Gandhi, the 'Satyagraha, object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer. We must be tender towards others and be slow to attribute motives. We should convert to others by gentle persuasion and reasoning. But according to Gandhi, "Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding". Self-suffering is symbolic of love and respect for the opponent. It is moral forces which make the opponent realize the injustice of his actions. It would tend to humanize his feelings towards the Satyagrahi. 'Satyagraha' is the impersonal motive of the 'Satyagraha' and it's by products; non-cooperation and civil resistances is different forum of self-suffering.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second important feature of 'Satyagraha' is the impersonal motive of the 'Satyagrahi' who is dedicated to the course of truth. According to Gandhi, a 'Satyagrahi; will be willing to die so that the others may live. To do away with injustice, a 'Satyagrahi' should discipline him in such a way as he becomes an impersonal moral force. A 'Satyagrahi' must exercise self restraint as regards food, drinks and drug. He must also exercise moral restraint by swearing by 'Satya' 'Ahimsa' 'Asteya' 'Asarigoah' and Bramhacharya. Moreover a 'Satyagrahi'

is supposed to purify himself by fasting and by controlling his thought and word. He should find joy in renunciation and sacrifice. Sadhana (pursuit of an impersonal object) and 'Tapasya' (self-restrain and self-suffering) are the essence of Satyagrahi. Moral, social and political progress can be achieved 'through Sadhana. Fearlessness is the third important characteristic of Satyagrahi, is a pre-requisite to spiritual or moral regeneration 'Satyagraha' imbibes courage which is above violence. It is the weapon of the brave, not of the timid and the coward. We should learn the art of killing in the training for violence. A devotee of non-violence has to the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. The last but not least characteristic of 'Satyagraha' is that it brings about a change in social relationship without harming men. The 'Tapasya' of the 'Satyagrahi's' brings about a change in relationships and it eliminates injustice. A 'Satyagrahi' aims at the integration end not the suppression of the legitimate differences. According to Gandhi, "The end of non-violent, "war" is always an agreement, never dictation, and much less humiliation of the opponent. For me, the law of Satyagraha, the law of love is an eternal principle. I cooperate with all that is good. I desire to non-cooperate with all that is evil. A 'Satyagrahi; must be a model citizen like Socrates who upheld the truth and bravely suffered the punishment of death.

Styagraha and Non-Cooperation:

Gandhi has differentiated 'Satyagraha' from non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience. 'Satyagraha is a broader concept and it encompasses the other two. According to Gandhi's Civil Disobedience is civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments. The term civil disobedience was perhaps given to us by Thoreau, a great American Transcendentalist and saint. Thoreau has written a Treatise on the duty of Civil Disobedience. Thoreau himself resisted the laws of a slave state. He refused to pay taxes; invoked the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffered imprisonment. This is also equivalent to Gandhi's 'Satyagraha'. He said, 'Satyagraha differs from passive resistance as the North pole from the South. The letter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.^{iv}

Non-cooperation implies not to co-operation with the state that is deemed corrupt. This is also a part of 'Satyagraha'. The masses can participate in non-cooperation activities but only a select few can practice Civil Disobedience. According to Gandhi, Civil Disobedience is the purest type of constitutional agitation. Of course, it becomes degrading and despicable if its civil, i.e. non-violent character is a mere camouflage. A votary of civil disobedience submits to the penalty of disobedience and cheerfully accepts Jain discipline and the accompanying hardships. Civil disobedience presumes an honest and willing observance of all laws which do not hurt the moral sense. It is not a state of lawlessness. Rather it demands a law-abiding spirit coupled with self-restraint. According to Gandhi's disobedience without civility, discipline, discrimination, non-violence is certain destruction. He regarded civil disobedience as our birth-right to civil

disobedience, but this right does not permit violent revolt. The resister suffers the consequences of disobedience. In order to realize his goal, he has to undergo a long course of self-purification and suffering. The right of disobedience belongs to every human being. It becomes a secret duty when it springs from love for truth. Gandhi differentiated civil disobedience from non-cooperation. He regarded civil disobedience as a universal human right. Only a few were capable of exemplifying it practically in a spirit of self-suffering. Non-cooperation was a weapon of social change and the masses could participate in it. Although both civil disobedience and non-cooperation contained elements of self-suffering and non-violence, yet 'Tapasya' was an important ingredient of civil disobedience and 'ahimsa' that of non-cooperation. According to Gandhi, "non-cooperation is a struggle against compulsory co-operation, against one-sided combination, against the armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilization. According to Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, 'Tapasya conceived as a matter of discipline of attaining individual salvation was given a new consolation and was introduced in the field of social practice by Gandhi.' Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean weak submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of tyrant. Moris-Jones said, 'The merit of self-suffering lies not at all in its being a weapon of the weak; indeed its use demands unusual courage and freedom from fear.' As per the words of Smuts, 'you desire victory by self-suffering alone, and never transgress yourself imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer, helplessness. 'Co-operation with a just government is a duty; non-cooperation with an unjust government is equally a duty. For Gandhi, civil disobedience and non-cooperation were non-violent methods of solving conflicts. They were peaceful means of bringing about changes in social and political life. Gandhi's life was dedicated to the spread of sacred teaching of non-retaliation for handling social and political problems. He stressed the fundamental values underlying the doctrine of 'Satyagraha'. "Satyagrahi is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches and civil disobedience is one branch, 'Satya' and 'Ahimsa' together make the parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out." Gandhi knew that to spread the doctrines of 'Satya' and 'ahimsa' was a herculean task but he did not shrink it. He dedicated and sacrificed his life for it. Through 'Satyagraha' Gandhi showed a way of active use of truth and non-violence as a social weapon to fight evil, injustice and tyranny.^v

Satya, Ahimsa and Self Realization:

Tapasya (self-suffering) is a vital expression of 'Satya' and 'ahimsa' and thus is an important ingredient of Satyagraha. A 'Satyagraha' must preserve the dignity of the individual even at the cost of loss of property or life self-suffering does not imply submission to humiliation. It is not a weapon of the weak but that of the brave. Self-suffering ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enrich the world by their sacrifice. Self-sacrifice and voluntary submission to injury is a positive policy and is not a matter of last resort Gandhi believed that most of the miseries and misunderstandings of the world disappear if we step into the shoes of

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our appointments or to think of them charitable. No country has ever progressed without being purified through the fire of suffering. Thus 'Satyagraha' pre-suppose self-suffering if our suffering is pure and intense, it is bound to melt the heart of even the coldest tyrant. Gandhi has differentiated 'Satyagraha' from 'Duragraha' 'Satyagraha' is a healthy and natural device for purifying and strengthening society, while Duragraha is an unhealthy and unnatural interference. Satyagraha unlike 'Duragraha' is never adopted abruptly. Satyagraha is not resorted to for personal gain, but only for the good of others. It Satyagraha, should always be ready to undergo suffering and pecuniary loss. He must have faith in his cause and his means. Gandhi believed that there can be no 'Satyagraha' in an unjust cause. Unlike 'Duragraha' 'Satyagraha' is gentle it never wounds. It is not the result of another or malice. It is a movement that aims at translating ideas into action. Gandhi warns that much abuse might vitiate a Satyagraha campaign and thus result in duragraha.

Conclusion:

Gandhi's 'Satyagrah' is also based on mystical, philosophical and ethical grounds. Mystics of all ages have experienced the oneness of spirit of consciousness and of life. Their aim had been to live in tune with the infinite. Gandhi's 'Satyagrahi' subscribes to this view of unity. Love in essence implies oneness with all. Non-violence follows from belief in the basic unity of all beings. For Gandhi all life is sacred to injure any life is to injure oneself to injure God. This inner experience is the mystical basis of Satyagraha. A Satyagraha life is one continuous process of doing good all. He chooses path of suffering and sacrifice. According to ancient thinkers and philosophers, a single spirit pervades the universe and that one underlines the many. Ethics also supports 'Satyagraha' because a Satyagrahi pursues truth through love and non-violence alone. He seeks the good of all through love and sacrifice. His life is inspired by love. He believes in the triumph of the spirit over the body and follows the path of self-purification. A Satyagrahi strives for the victory of truth and fight. In the final analysis, the doctrine of 'Satyagraha' is based on religious, ethical and metaphysical belief. Gandhi was not interested in divinity parse. Religious and spiritualism for him were the means of self-renewal in order to fight injustice and to work for a new order of civilizations. His spiritual reserves enabled him to meet the challenge of social injustice. Let us know study, of course, in brief Gandhi's ideas in connection with the self realization.

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