

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi also popularly and respectfully called 'Mahatma' and 'father of the nation' was born on 2nd October 1869 at Porbandar of Gujarat state . After having his early education in India he went to England in 1888 to study law and returned to India in 1891. In 1893 he left for South Africa and stayed there for 20 years during those years he struggled hard to improve the condition of the Indians living there.

In 1915 he came back to India and got involved in India's struggle for National independence . Gandhian Era of the freedom struggle started in the year 1920 with the launch of the non cooperation movement.He also started the civil disobedience movement in 1931 Quit India Movement in 1942 etc to free India from British imperialism. He lead India successfully through the freedom struggle during what was called the Gandhi Era. For the first time in the history of the world Gandhi wielded the extraordinary spiritual weapons of Satya and Ahimsa. In 1942 Gandhi called upon the British to quit India .5 years and 7 days after he asked the British to quit, India secured complete Independence. Thus Gandhi successfully ended British rule in India . On January 30th 1948 Gandhi was shot Dead By Nathuram Godse . People regard Gandhi Martyr who died for the cause of communal harmony peace and other great values. No other leader had commanded Such love reverence and loyalty of the people of India like Gandhi did. Therefore who was affectionately called 'Bapuji' and the prophet of Sabarmati . He was also regarded as a 'great soul' or 'Mahatma'.

Major works of Gandhi

1. My Experiment With Truth
- 2.Satyagraha in South Africa
- 3.Indian state problems
- 4.Hind Swaraj
- 5.Nonviolence in peace and war etc

Journals

Young India, NavJivan, Harijan

1. Explain Mahatma' Gandhis ideas on non violence.

Mahatma Gandhi's greatest contribution to mankind are his teaching and practice of nonviolence .In 1920 He wrote non violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. Non violence was not just a philosophical principle but the matter of the heart .Gandhi had a stanch Belief in the efficacy of non violence which he felt it would bring about real freedom.

Non violence is the struggle for truth according to Mahatma Gandhi truth is the basic factor of non-violence and he equated truth with God and God with Truth. This truthfulness was to be in words as well as in thought .Gandhi felt that one has to take care to see that the cause for which one is fighting is absolutely true . Truth is more precious than victory which implies that non violence cannot be taken up lightly.

Non violence does not mean pacifism non violence according to Mahatma Gandhi is positive dynamic and constructive rather than negative. It does not mean pacifism or weak submission to the will of the The Evil doer. It is is soul force or truth force or truth seeking force . It is in fact a force which is more positive then electricity. Mahatma Gandhi said that the highest violence can be met by the highest non violence is non violence is therefore called as the 'bravery of the soul' and an 'adventure in love' .

Non violence is ahimsa Gandhi's principle of non violence has its roots in the Indian doctrine of ahimsa or no Non injury. Negatively it means refraining from causing pain or the taking of any life . Ahimsa means avoiding injury to anything on earth enthought word and deed . Ahimsa in the positive form means good will towards others and doing good to others. Ahimsa means infinite Love which means infinite capacity for suffering. Ahimsa thus stands for the highest type of love kindness and self sacrifice .Gandhi became a champion of ahimsa after reading Tolstoy's book 'the kingdom of God is within you'.

Non violence is the weapon of the strong non violence is not the weapon of the week and cowardly it is the weapon of the strong. One who uses non-violence has also the ability to be violent. The principle of nonviolence is superior to violence. Non violence can never be the weapon of those who are morally weak. Non violence according to Mahatma Gandhi can melt even the stoniest of Hearts. Ahimsa in its positive form therefore means the largest love and the greatest charity. Non-violence is the strongest force known which may be used even against the most powerful government.

Non violence in earth total philosophy of life non violence according to Gandhi is a total philosophy of life pervading the public and private spheres in the economic field it implies a decentralized village economy opposed to both capitalism and communism which are forms of exploitation. In the political field it implies the Federation of autonomous village republics.

Practice of nonviolence not dependent on mass support Mahatma Gandhi felt that non violence may be practiced even by a single individual who has the soul Force for moral courage. The effectiveness of non violence is not dependent on mass support. Due to this conviction Mahatma Gandhi was never afraid to stand alone to practice non violence.

Requisites of nonviolence according to Gandhi certain requisites or necessary to practice non violence. They are inner purity, fasting, fearlessness ,non possession and perseverance.

Inner purity included self discipline, civility and fearlessness. Fasting was also regarded as an important element in the practice of non violence. If non violence has to become effective fearlessness should be practiced. Non possession is non attachment to material things of life. According to Gandhi 'non violence is the first article of my faith it is also the last article of my creed.'

Gandhi's ideas of Satyagraha

2. What is satyagraha ? Explain it's various dimensions?

The idea of Satyagraha remains the very soul of Gandhian technique. It is also a very unique contribution of Gandhi to Indian political thought and politics. He used that technique not only in South Africa but also in India. Satyagraha to Gandhi meant the assertion of truth or holding on the truth. Satyagraha is an inherent birthright of a person. It is not merely a sacred right but it can also be a sacred duty.

According to Gandhi Satyagraha is defined as 'Vindication of truth by bearing witness to its true self suffering in other words love.'

Meaning of Satyagraha

Satyagraha means

1. The technique of resisting all that is evil and just impure and untrue by love, self suffering and by appealing to the divine Spark of the soul of the opponent.
2. It is the weapon of the strongest and the bravest so it does not originate with fear.
3. It is the Vindication of truth true love or self suffering which can win the hearts of all.
4. Satyagraha is truth force love force or soul force.
5. Satyagraha is an inherent birthright of a person. It is not only sacred right but it can also be a sacred duty.
6. Ahimsa is also means for asserting truth which implies that ahimsa and Satyagraha always go together.
7. Satyagraha is voluntary.

Gandhi lay down strict principles of moral discipline for the satyagrahi they are,

1. Satyagrahi must have an unshakeable Belief in God.
2. He must not hanker after wealth and fame.
3. He must obey the leader of the Satyagraha unit
4. He should practice brahmacharya and should be absolutely fearless and firm in his resolve.
5. Satyagraha can never be resorted to for personal gains by the Satyagrahi.
6. The Satyagrahi should purify himself and employ pure means for serving righteous cause.

Techniques of Satyagraha

There are different techniques of satyagraha. It can assume the following forms.

1. **Non-Cooperation** this is an effective technique which could be used by the helpless people against the government. Non cooperation is therefore directed against the government or authority. Gandhi felt that the people are oppressed and exploited as they cooperate willingly with the government. Non cooperation can assume the following forms

Hartal stands for stopping of business for registering protest. It is a kind of peaceful protest the main object being to draw the attention of the people and also the government to the problem involved.

Social ostracism or boycott this is a technique that is adopted to Boycott socially those who defeat public opinion and fail to take part in non cooperation. Gandhi felt that it should be used in a very limited sense so that no physical harm insult or abuse is caused to the person non-cooperating.

Picketing the literal meaning of picketing is 'forming a living wall' against some individuals or articles. Here the main intention is not to create difficulties but to establish the truth. Picketing does not mean

sitting in 'dharna' Gandhi felt that picketing should not involve violence, coercion, intermediation, discourtesy, burning of effigies and hunger strikes.

2. **Civil disobedience** Gandhi preferred any kind of disobedience to be always Civil and never criminal. Any Revolt must be a non violent revolt. Civil disobedience is also a form of non cooperation. It is a protest against unjust law and the last stage of non cooperation. Gandhi Wanted those who take part in this protest to be mentally strong to accept any punishment meted out to them for going against the law .Gandhi referred to it as ' a complete effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt'.

Non payment of tax this is a technique adopted by a Satyagrahi who believes that a particular tax is livid illegally or unjustly.

3. **Hijrat or voluntary exile** this is a technique proposed by Gandhi to escape from oppression and injustice. Hijrat literally means voluntary example from the permanent place of residence to escape from oppression and injustice. For example if a particular group is subject to operation the best course open to them is to leave the village of their permanent residence. This is an attempt to live with self respect.
4. **Fasting** Gandhi felt that fasting may be used as a weapon of moral coercion only by those who have the moral strength and purity of mind. It is the most powerful form of Satyagraha which Gandhi called as a fiery weapon but if misused he felt that it would be the most dangerous.
5. **Strike** Gandhi felt that this weapon is to be utilized to convert the heart of the wrongdoing opponent. Strike is a kind of protest involving the stoppage of work to draw the attention of the public on a certain issue. It is undertaken by the workers for the redressal of their grievances. Gandhi wanted it to be voluntary and non violent.

Thus Gandhi considered Satyagraha as a Vindication of truth and the individuals legitimate right to oppose coercive authority. Gandhi through Satyagraha aimed at 'establishing ultimate authority of the state in the consent of the individuals conscience'.