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**E-CONTENT**

**GANDHIAN THOUGHT**

**Ahimsa and Satyagraha**

Gandhiji was a man of faith. He accepted certain assumption as fundamental to his belief and action. He drew upon these for his support, sustenance and inspiration. Within his accepted frame, he developed and expressed his ideas, experimented with them and followed

the conclusions arrived at. Some idea of these assumptions is obviously, primary to the proper understanding of his thought.

## **The Human Nature : Its Character**

Gandhi held that human nature is not entirely good, nor it is entirely bad. The soul within the man is the spirit of God. Gandhi gives supreme importance to individual, yet he being one of the group, his role influences others. "Hence whether an individual is good or bad is not merely his own concern, but really the concern of the whole community."

## **God, Truth and Faith**

Gandhiji believed in the comprehensiveness and the omnipotence of the divine. The supreme is to him an indefinable and mysterious power that pervades everything. He is not a person " . . . . I gather that God is life, truth, light. He is love."

Gandhiji later on instead of saying God is truth he started saying truth is God. The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, which means being. And nothing is or exist in reality except truth. Gandhiji said where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (Anand). Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as Sat chit Anand, one who combines in himself truth knowledge and bliss.

Belief in God is based on faith. Faith is a living, wide awake consciousness of God within." "... A person having faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human beings."

## **Ahimsa**

Ahimsa, non-violence or non killing is "avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed."

Ahimsa is not to be identified with helplessness and cowardice. "Non-violence pre supposes ability to strike. It is a conscious, deliberate restraint put upon ones desire for vengeance."

It is summit of bravery. Perfect non-violence, Gandhiji concedes is impossible.

There is deep relation between Ahimsa and truth. Ahimsa is not a goal. Truth is a goal. But we have no means of realizing truth in human relationship except through the practice of ahimsa.

A steadfast pursuit of ahimsa is inevitably bound to truth – not to violence. That is why I swear by Ahimsa. Truth came naturally to me. Ahimsa I acquired after a struggle.

## **Means and Ends**

Means and ends are inseparable. "We reap exactly as we sow". The means are not just the means, but everything that determines the nature of the end. " The means may be linked to a seed , the ends to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between seed and the tree". he applies the means and ends relation

to all the field of activity: education, revolution of masses, national unity, political system, social reform and everything else.

## **Satyagraha, the weapon of Ahimsa**

Satyagraha means "holding on to truth" or insistence on truth". It is to him the law of suffering and "Tapasya for truth". It excludes violence but includes active resistance which consists of the active force of love, faith and sacrifice.

## **The Aim of Satyagrahi**

The aim before the Satyagrahi must be concrete, particular and definite. The leader should follow the open method and coercive. The Satyagrahi has to make the opponent realize his wrong and induce him to change his course of conduct. He must arouse the best in him. To arouse the best in the opponent, a Satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa. He should differentiate between the wrong and the wrong-doer and aimed to destroy the wrong not the wrong-doer.

Satyagrahi must have the honesty of purpose. He must be completely non-violence, disciplined and loyal to his immediate commander. He must accept everything cheerfully.

## **The rules of command for a satyagrahi Leader.**

- (i) Brahmacharya: Gandhiji does not use the term braahamcharya in the popular sense. His emphasis is on the sex discipline means control over all the sense in thought, word and deed.
- (ii) satyagrahi must eat to live, not live to eat. It implies that there should be complete cooperation between body and mind. Gandhiji has prescribed for satyagrahi the appropriate dietic restriction coupled with fasting and prayer.
- (iii) Satyagrahi must be fearless. He should fear none except God. " Let us fear god and we shall cease to fear man".
- (iv) He must be free from material acquisitiveness. He should practice non-stealing and non-possession. He should not multiply his material requirements.
- (v) He should hold his surplus property as a trust for the society. So also he should use his talents for the society.
- (vi) satyagrahi leader must abide by the principal of bread-labour, which means earning ones living by physical labour. It includes immediate requirements of food and clothing.
- (vii) He should follow swadeshi. Means depends on the locally available goods.
- (viii) A Satyagrahi leader should not accept any basis of discrimination such as caste or religion between man and man. He must accept the unity of all life as a fundamental reality.
- (ix) He must regard all religions in equal respect as all aim to give purpose to life.

(x) humanism must be his way of life. " true humanity means strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed to the service of huminity".

## **Satyagraha as a Corporate Action**

Satyagraha may be individual or corporate. Gandhiji has indicated the following methods of corporate satyagraha.

(a) **Non-cooperation** with the evil is the foremost method of corporate or individual satyagraha. All work is done by co-operation. Non-cooperation is the weapon that can be used to mitigate the evil.

(b) **Civil Disobedience:-** law is for the welfare of the people. One has to be law abiding. But if the law made in disregard, to this purpose, it would be immoral and unjust. In such situation, disobedience of law is moral. Civil disobedience is the legitimate weapon available to a citizen. To " refuse to assist the ruler who misrules" is the recognized right of the people since times immemorial.

(c) **Fasting :-** It gives moral strength to satyagrahi. It is a means of self purification.

(d) **Hartal :-** It is cessation of business to draw the attention of the government and the people to the issue the satyagrahi has taken in hand. To make it effective, it must be voluntary. It must also be infrequent.

(e) **Social Boycott :-** It is social ostracism. It is an age old the once to pressurize, the offender to abide by the norms.

(f) **Picketing :-** It resorted to hinder a particular person wanting to do a particular thing. It should not block the movement of persons in general. The act of preventing should be peaceful, free from coercion, intimidation and discourtesy.

(g) **Hijrat :-** In another words it is movement by the people in protest to settle place. Gandhiji advised Hijrat to the Harijans of kavitha to mmigrate, as the caste hindus of the place were regularly terrorizing over them and this had caused extreme despondency among the harijans. It can be restored to only in extreme cases.

## **Satyagraha and Passive Resistance**

Satyagrah is not passive resistance. Gandhiji makes a sharp differentiation between the two. Satyagrah involves active resistance to the evil. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Satyagraha is non-violence, passive resistance has scope for use of arms. Satyagraha aims at changing ones heart passive reststance has no such appeal. Satyagraha aims at the destruction of evil but not the evildoer. Passive resistance makes no such distinction.



**THANK YOU**