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## Gandhi's view on 'love and non-violence'

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### Abstract

Love and Non-Violence are the great tools adopted by Mahatma Gandhi to get the great aim succeed for the welfare of country. It was very difficult at that time before the English to have a open fight with them at once. He adopted these great tools to linger the time and to unite and inspire the Indian gradually to fight against them. Love and Non-violence are the tools that calm the anger of the person ahead and can listen what the communicator wants to express. Love ever suffers, never resents and never protests. The communicator of love is blessed with a great quality '*tapasya*'. It is due to adoption of the tools, Gandhi Ji is called Mahatma.

**Keywords:** Love, Non-Violence, Mahatma, *tapasya*, communicator

### Introduction

The term 'Non-violence' is made up of two words: 'None' and 'Violence'. Non is a prefix used freely in English and meaning '*not*', '*lack of*' or '*sham*' giving a negative sense to any word. In Latin, Non means 'not, by no means, not at all, not a'. In Middle English, Non means 'not'. It differs from 'un' as it denotes mere negation or absence of the thing or quality. While Violence comes from Latin '*Violentia*' meaning 'improper treatment'. Hence, Nonviolence means 'abstention from violence as a matter of principle'.

Love is a Middle English word. It comes from Old English '*lufu*', from Proto West Germanic '*lubu*', from Proto Germanic '*lubo*', from Proto-Indo-European '*lubon*'. It is used both as countable and uncountable noun, both singular and plural form. As uncountable noun, it means strong affection, deep caring for existence of another. As countable noun, it means romantic feelings, a darling, a sweet heart, beloved.

The most important ingredient in the discipline of love is 'the ability to accept suffering'. Love, say all sages, is never selfish. It is not possessive. It is nourished by self-sacrifice. The test of love is '*tapasya*', and '*tapasya*' is self-offering. Love never claims, it gives. Love ever suffers, never resents and never protests. One of the basic ideas in the Indian religious tradition is that true happiness can only be gained by enduring and assimilating suffering, not by avoiding it. There is an episode of famous myth of ocean churning which brings out this idea. The gods and the demons churned the primeval ocean of milk for obtaining '*amrita*', the nectar of immortality. Just before the ocean yielded nectar a jar of deadly poison emerged. The fumes of that poison were so lethal that the gods and the demons had to suspend the churning. They appealed Shiva, the great ascetic, who was meditating on the highest peak of the Himalayas. Lord Shiva came out of his meditation and quietly swallowed the poison. The gods and the demons then resumed the churning which finally yielded up the jar of nectar. The message is clear. Poison has to be swallowed before nectar can be obtained. One cannot taste pleasure without assimilating pain. Love, asserts our poet playwright:

is an all subduing force, the most unconquerable, the most fearless, the most powerful force that makes us sacrifice ourselves for others similarly, give up our own lives for others unflinchingly and thereby gain life eternal<sup>[1]</sup>.

Love is an extremely powerful force, if used with conviction and sincerity, is true literally rather than metaphorically. This force can be kindled in others or transmitted from one heart to another. Power of Love is portrayed by William Shakespeare in the Sonnet 'Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds':

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove

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The words ‘complete love’ are worth noting. Gandhi includes in love everything associated with the gentle, inwardly refined, humane side of our nature. Tagore continues at another place:

At every step, in the world we find clear indications of this force of unity, of this reality. If anything on earth can overcome fear, make light, Disaster, not mind loss, ignore death- that is lover<sup>[1]</sup>.

Both ‘Love and Nonviolence’ become in combination a great force. ‘Love’ and ‘non-violence’ are both inter-linked and interdependent. One cannot survive without the other. Love, then which is negatively referred to as non-violence, is an extremely potent weapon. In the modern period of the world history nobody has experienced with this ‘Potent Weapon’ as much and as successfully as Gandhi did during India’s struggle of freedom against the British Raj. ‘Love’ and ‘non-violence’ are in Gandhi own words, “as old as the Himalayas”, His uniqueness consisted, as Narvane opines: in using the power of love in the modern context on a mass basis involving millions, and in social, political and economic situations. Moreover, he harnessed this power in systematic way, developing in into a science through many decades of trial and error<sup>[9]</sup>.

Love, in its true sense, must necessarily be universal. Love is not love if it is limited to one’s family. Love would be incomplete without tolerance, sympathy, forgiveness, compassion and charity. Gandhi liked the Buddha and believed that love must embrace ‘all that lives, all that breathes’, as the Buddha put it. There are no feelings of being higher or lower in the business of love. Because love frees a man of his self and when self is liberated there is no ego, no pride and no self-consciousness.

As for independence of India, Gandhi by the means of ‘Love’ and ‘Non-violence’ struggled and succeeded.

Gandhi’s attempt to lead mass movement with a commitment to non-violence, seemed amazingly new. Many prominent writers and thinkers like Gilbert Murray and Romain Rolland in the West first respond with skepticism, but later understood the importance of Gandhi’s approaches. The greatness of Gandhi lies not in his struggle for India’s freedom, but making it with love and non-violence. He himself admits:

To see the universal and all-pervading sprit of Truth to face one must be able to ‘love’ the meanest of creation as one self<sup>[1]</sup>.

Gandhi believed that even the most difficult task can be accomplished by Love and Non-violence and said that truth can be realized in perfect sense through ‘love’ and ‘ahimsa’ and said that ‘he prayeth but who love the best both man and bird beast’ was his diction. Ghandhi believed non-violence infinitely superior to violence, as non-violence in its dynamic condition leads to conscious suffering. The Rishis who preached the use of non-violence have a higher place in the heart of man than the well-known scientists. They say that salvation lays in non-violence, not in violence, and it is the real purpose of life. That is what Gandhi adopted non-violence his tool during independence of India. If he had not adopted this tool of infinite power, India would not have got freedom. In fact, Gandhi ideal state was a non-violent democratic state where social life would remain self-regulated. In a democratic state, everyone is his own ruler. He firmly believed that the ideal of non-violence could be achieved only, if the gulf dividing the rich and the poor is made as small as possible. To form Hind Swaraj (A Home

rule), while the members of Indian Congress were divided; Gandhi realized the need of ‘ahimsa’ and ‘non-violence to unite the all members for the completion of the task. When Gandhi stepped into political field as a leader of the opposition to the Rowlat bill, he was moved by a desire to spare the country from violence. During the course of campaign for independence, Gandhi says:

The law of complete love is the law of my being. But I am not preaching this final law through the Political measures, I advocate. I know that any such attempt is foredoomed to failure. To expect a whole mass of men and women to obey that law all at once is not to know its working<sup>[5]</sup>.

Love plays equally significant role in transforming an individual’s thought-process that misleads him on the way of aversion to this real world.

Gandhi never asks men for more than they can give. But he asks for all that he can give. It is the quality of ‘love’ and ‘compassion’. Gandhi hates cowardice and the coward. Gandhi drives the coward from his community. He says:

Where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I advise violence. I cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing. But to him who has not this courage I advise that of killing and of being killed, rather than that of shamefully feeling from danger. For he who runs away commits mental violence; he runs away because he has not the courage to be killed while he kills. I would risk violence a thousand times rather than emasculation of the race. I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. Abstinence is forgiveness only when there is power to punish, it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from the helpless creature<sup>[4]</sup>,

Gandhi finds non-violence a great force. By using the strong weapon even a single individual can easily defy the whole might of an unjust empire. Gandhi’s was firmly convinced that not only individuals, but event nations have to go through the fire-ordeals of suffering if they want to tread the path of non-violence in their struggle against oppression.

Gandhi says that Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of brute. Gandhi really changed the mentality of the people living in India. Even Rabindranath Tagore was also astonished when he saw this great change returning to India after traveling several years in Europe and found that it was the tool ‘no-violence’ applied by Mahatma Gandhi’ that brought this change. In Gora, Tagore shows a deep love for India like Gandhi. Gora, who is not really the son of the Hindu father and mother who have brought him up. He is a strong nationalist leader and a devoted Hindu. Similarly, in the ‘home and the world’ the male character, Nikhil who is a patriot and expresses his patriotism by helping the village people near his house. Nikhil spends his money on encouraging Swadeshi Cloth. He forbids the sale of foreign Cloth in the market. This story shows the picture of the ‘Swadeshi’ movement of 1905. The story ‘Four Chapters’ also describes the political movements of the time. Hence it can be said both Tagore and Gandhi have same patriotism feelings towards India and same attachment to Swadeshi Movement.

Gandhi’s attitude to Tagore is one of loving regard remained unchanged, he always feels owes to Tagore. Tagore admits that we need all the moral force which Mahtma Gandhi represents, and which he alone in the world can represent. In non-co-operation campaign named ‘Khilafat’, there was a great massacres in Punjab. Tagore is always against any

kind of killing and says that it is criminal to transform moral force into force. He always looked Gandhi as a saint. With Gandhi everything is nature, modest, simple, pure-while all his struggles are hollowed by religious serenity. Togore writes from London that we are grateful to Gandhi for giving India a chance to prove that her faith in the divine spirit of man's still living. Gandhi was a frequent visitor at Tagore's home at Santiniketan; and considered it as a retreat while he was in England his children had their home there. Due to death of Tilak, Gandhi had to enter in the arena of politics with a light heart. Catherine D. Groth in his translation says:

The controversy between Tagore and Gandhi having great minds in, both moved by mutual admiration and esteem, but as fatally separated in their feeling as a philosopher can be from an apostle, a St. Paul from a Plato as important. For on one side we have the spirit of religious faith and charity seeking to found a new humanity. On the other, we have intelligence, free born, serene and broad, seeking to unite aspirations of all humanity in sympathy and understanding [3].

Tagore tries in the clamor of non- co-operation, to find a melody and says that my prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the people of the world. For India unity is truth and division evil. Unity is that which embraces and understands everything. Consequently, it cannot be attained through negation. Even, at the beginning of non-operation movement, Tagore does want any kind violence. He refuges his students who come to ask his advice for the participation in the movement saying that the boycotting of Schools and colleges is meaningless and stresses that the students do not need make a sacrifice. At this, his students also doubted his patriotism. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui says:

Two sons of mother India, more than any others, have raised her dignity and status in the eyes of the world, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahtma Gandhi. Tagore, the poet and Gandhi the mystic Tagore, the poet and Gandhi the mystic carried India forward at one bound and placed her along with others in the Vanguard of world culture and civilization [6]."

Tagore and Gandhi are the two counterparts of the 'New life Movement' in India. The one thinks, the other acts. Thus they are like the two wheels of the golden chariot of idealism moving forward, as shows blow:

Ideal from of relationship between man and man, between man and woman, between man and nature and between man and the Supreme being is love. The hall of union is there where dwells the lover in the heart of existence [5].

It cannot be denied with the fact that Gandhi always applied the tool of Love and Non-violence during the struggle for Independence to bring peace. Gandhi considers Non-violence as a great tool and part and parcel of life. "My marriage to nonviolence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be defeated from my position."

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