

Exploring World Peace in the Ideas of Gandhi



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Abstract

Gandhian way to world peace does not seem to be any utopia. In fact, Gandhi calls himself a "practical idealists". For one thing, Gandhi does not commit the logical error of advocating or pursuing the goal of peace through war and force. Again, Gandhi does not look for to resolve the complicated problems of world peace by means of any easy or piecemeal methods. On the other hand, he goes to the root of the problems and also covers the personal, social, economic, political and academic dimension of world order and peace. He also acknowledges the reciprocity of various factors related to war and peace and provided a holistic answer to them. Above all, Gandhi warns against the disastrous or self-destructive thrust of "modern civilization". In *Hind Swaraj* (1909), Gandhi called this "civilization" a "disease" and a "nine days wonder", which is able to be destroyed under its own weight. Thanks to the modern weapons of mass destruction, environmental pollution, resource-depletion, ecological degradation and demographic pressure which appears to be coming true rather gravely for the future of humankind.

Keywords: Resistance, Nonviolence, Nuclearisation, Internationalism, Materialism, Swadeshi, Decentralization, Nationalism, Karma, Capitalists, Sarvodaya.

Introduction

For the heads of state and representatives, in general, world peace connects mainly the postponement of war. No sooner a war or armed conflict is ended, they start preparing for the other one. Often they look upon peace as utopian to think in terms of enduring tranquility. But the problem needs deeper consideration. Peace is not a state of perfection which may be the saturation point of the human development and unchanging or stagnant condition from which all conflict will have completely disappeared.

What is the problem undeniably requires an advance towards a cooperating world order from which the strands of international tensions and conflict will have been removed or, at least minimized, and where there would be a satisfactory mechanism to settle disputes among nations harmoniously. However, the problem of world peace is a fundamental challenge of wider human concern. Therefore, it affects and engages the minds of all. Hence, so to say there may be as many perceptions or opinions on peace as are the number of thinking men in the world. There is however no way to know to everybody's point of view and in fact, the effort may be hardly worthwhile. From time to time we come across various expressions such as British way, USSR way, the League of Nations way, United Nations way and the American way to world peace. However, such approaches to world peace, if any, only so many, and diplomacy always aims at the promotion of selfish national interests, with the result, it became the cause of international tensions rather than a means of their lasting resolution. Hence, in this context an attempt has been made to evolve Gandhian perspective on world peace.

Gandhi did not discuss global problems to the same extent as he did problems of immediate connection with the Indians. But, the occasional remarks that he makes on international affairs along with an extension of the implications of his utterances within the domestic context reveal a reasonably developed conception of a peaceful world order. To him, human life is one and cannot be divided into different compartments. He held that the same rules of morality, that guide individuals in their social conduct, must also guide groups and nations in their mutual intercourse. It should be an immoral and sinful for nations to cheat and injure one another, as it is for people to do so in their civil life¹.

Aim of the Study

The aims of the study is to understand the various aspect of world order as understood by Gandhiji. The focus of the study shall also be to see the idea of peace as understood by Gandhiji. Further to it, the highlights of the ills of the 'modern civilization' as envisaged by Gandhiji and the he connect it with the his idea of Peace will also be part of the this piece of writing. the nuanced focus of the study shall also be to explore how his idealism of influenced the domain of practical politics of the world.

Gandhian Relevance

Gandhi held that every action, whether executed for self, family, group or nation, must produce its own applicable result, *Karma*. Evil actions create evil karma and vice-versa. In the international pasture the evil appears to own overhauled the world today. The present century has witnessed some of the bloodiest wars, fought for various purposes, however it is obvious that every preceding war has been the supply of a subsequent conflict, that facilitates different confrontation, e.g., the first world war became the reason behind the Second world war. Similarly, the cold war that had taken place after the Second world war between the two super powers i.e., Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) and the United States of America (USA), as a result of the suspicion erupted and injustices practiced throughout the Second world war. If it will flare into a hot World War III, it might result to the evil karma created by the two previous World Wars.

Indeed, the establishment of the United Nations to finish the "Scourge of War" has additionally for the most part failing. Varied wars or conflicts have taken place throughout the world, especially, within the 'Third World region'². Throughout the past five decades, notable examples are the Korean War, the Vietnam war, Arab-Israeli Wars, Indian- Pakistan wars, Afghanistan war and the Iraq war. In this way the world cannot be bereft of the scourge of wars, unless the substitute is not discovering. Gandhian thought is the best explanation for the everlasting peace on earth.

Gandhi as a practical idealist makes out that through violence and counter violence the lasting peace cannot be established on Earth. At the moment global cultural trends are standing on violence and counter violence. To come out of this culture, Gandhian "non violent defense" would be a simple affair. In the words of Gandhi: A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such as a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-cooperate with the aggressor. Thus, supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the state will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way will be non-violent resistance of a people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. The underlying belief in either case is that Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply

dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery³.

Gandhi's purpose to debate the non-violent resistance is to form a humanist and ethical value, within the heart of the aggressor state. Because according to him: Behind the death dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still, is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a person make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, no retaliation with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit⁴.

The invention of the atomic bomb and their successful use in two major cities of Japan (Hiroshima and Nagasaki) in 1945, lead the world towards "Nuclearisation" and put the question mark on the Gandhian philosophy of "non-violent resistance". However Gandhi never discouraged by this, and continued to support the "non-violent resistance", even against the attack of the bomb. In one amongst the last interview given by him, he said: I would meet if by powerful action.... I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face of evil against him. The pilot would not see my face at such a height, I know. But the longing in our heart that will not come to harm will reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. Of those thousands, who were done to death in Hiroshima by the bombs if they had died with that prayerful, action did openly with prayer in their hearts without uttering a groan, than the war not has ended disgracefully as it has⁵. The essence of this is often that, if humanity or nation is serious regarding avoiding the possibility of nuclear destruction, they have to first be ready to regulate their mutual intercourse, as individuals do in civil life, by observing the rules of the moral law. As several pioneering reformers and prophets had to suffer within the case of building the moral law in civil life, so some nations must be ready to suffer for the establishment of the moral law among nations.

There is another side of Gandhian thought of international intercourse that we must note. His plan of independence was completely different from the old historical ideal of it. Like every fight for independence, he loves freedom. It was one thing smart in itself, one thing that every nation should have. However Gandhian conception of a nation's freedom was different from the usual one. He wished the liberty of the country not just for the sake of its own interest, except for the good of humanity and for the service⁶. As an individual sacrifice himself for the state, the state must be ready to sacrifice itself for humanity. Gandhi said: I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the call of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for village, the village for the District, District for the provinces and provinces for the whole nation, and

when we indulge in provincialism, I as Gujarati says, Gujarat first, Bengal and the rest of provinces next, if I live in Gujarat and prepare Gujarat so that the vast resources of Gujarat might be placed at the disposal of Bengal, may, on the whole of India, that Gujarat may die for the whole of India. My love, therefore, of nationalism, or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free-fee that if need be the whole country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room here for race hatred. Let that be our nationalism⁷.

Broadly speaking, Gandhi believed in evolving an international order through the non-violent national order or, as he put his, "internationalism through non-violent nationalism". He writes:

It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., When people belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on the ruin of, the other. Indian nationalism has struck a different path. It wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large... God having cast my lot in the midst of the people of India, I should be untrue to my Maker if I failed to serve them. If I do not know how to serve them I shall never know how to serve humanity. And I cannot possibly go wrong so long as I do not harm other nations in the act of serving my country⁸.

It may be aforementioned, however who is to bell the cat? Has any government had the right to require such a national sacrifice? Martyrdom of an entire population? This question is asked, as if the same quite sacrifice has not asked for government from their people when they call them to arms. The people to take the risks of war. However once it comes to the question of taking risks within the reason behind peace, that on balance are fewer as evidenced by India's struggle, they take refuge behind the people's can. The leaders have never, even in democracies, taken the people into their confidence once declaring war. It is the government that decides the question of peace and war. However it is going to be asked, can a nation be educated in non-violence. The education of a nation into a new ideology or morality does not consist in each member of the state being educated separately. There are not any colleges and schools where national ideologies and moralities is learnt⁹. Even in physical warfare most of the fighting is learnt throughout the war or there would be no universal military services. The acceptance of a new idea by the leadership makes for speedy public education. For this new weapon of non-violent resistance Gandhi did not open instructional institutions. He took great pains in educating the leaders. In this connection Gandhi says: If the recognized leaders of mankind, who have control over the engines of destruction, were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialist designs. This again

seems impossible without great nations easing to believe in soul destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore, increase their material possession¹⁰.

However, the condition is that the leaders should have a burning faith in non-violent resistance. It should be nothing placed on or dramatic. It must be the real stuff. It must be a belief that will stand all pressure. If need be, the leaders must be ready to allow up power and office within the pursuit of their ideal. Such a belief, Gandhi can come only from belief in God. He said truth is God. He held that there is one who observed the moral laws, whether he believed in God as popularly conceived or not, according to Gandhi had a spiritual belief. This is necessary because without faith nothing great can be done. It is faith which makes people believe that ultimately victory will be with them¹¹. Another quandary of the world peace is that the model of recent development that celebrated the furtherance of values of industrialism and materialism. From a Gandhian point of view, there is no distinction between the Marxists and Capitalists into this point as their methods of development are concerned. Both capitalism and communism are based on the glorification of material growth with the only difference being on the counts of possession and distribution. Marxists does not attach any spiritual importance to human life. The capitalists do not explicitly reject the value of spirituality, however would like to economize it, subordinate it, and afterwards, eliminate it¹².

Gandhi subscribed to non-materialist view of development as he was all too alert to the importance of material wants. In his view, material wants must not be pursued on the far side of essential. As Pyare Lal says, "man should rest content with what are his real wants and become self-sustaining. If he doesn't have this control, he cannot save himself"¹³. Gandhi believed that men need to realize themselves spiritually. Thus, development is not to be measured by using indicators like Gross National Product (GDP). That quality of life must not measured by what quantity people consume. It is to be judged by the extent of improvement within the personality and character of individuals. Gandhi said, "the day humanity ceases to believe ideals, it will descend to the extent of beasts"¹⁴. In this connection, it is quite appropriate to quote Jacques Martin: If development of the human being follows the directions of material individuality, he will be carried in the direction of hateful ego, whose law is to snatch, to absorb for one. In this case, personality as such will lead to adulterate, to dissolve. If, on the contrary, the development follows the direction of a spiritual personality, then it will be in the direction of the generous self of saints and heroes that man will be carried. Man will really be a person, in so far as the life of the spirit and of freedom will dominate in him that of passion and to the senses¹⁵.

It is clear that Gandhi stood for a humane and nature-friendly model of development. His idea of self-reliance needs a brief explanation. Gandhi wished the strengthening of the village economies on the idea of self-reliance that he called *Swadeshi*. He defined it as a "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the

exclusion of the more remote¹⁶. Swadeshi precludes any risk of conflict between producers and customers. Village industries are expected to thrive under the system. It is not equated with import substitution, because the latter doesn't imply as such the use of local resources. It is also, not the same as autarchy in which localized production will happen, however not necessarily localized consumption. Swadeshi doesn't rule out the possibility of trade. However, export promotion is out of the question. There is feeling that such a notion of self-reliance amounts to narrowness, that is refuted by Gandhi as: Self-sufficiency does not mean narrowness. To be self-sufficient is not to be altogether self-contained. In no circumstances would we be able to produce all the things we need. So through our aim is complete self-sufficiency, we shall have to get from outside what we cannot produce in the village; we shall have to produce more of what we can in order to thereby obtain in exchange what we unable to produce¹⁷.

One amongst the strengths of a self-reliant model of development is its capacity to forestall capitalist and imperialist penetration. It is pertinent to recall that Khadi (handwoven cloth) was a strong anti-imperialist image pushed to its extreme, it would amount to the deprivation of the markets, the existence of which is a prerequisite for capitalist expansion. Gandhi was particularly attentive to the requirement in India for a full employment and labour-intensive model of development as opposed to the capital intensive model of development that created unemployment. In this view, decentralization of production can nearly mechanically tackle the matter of distribution at the primary level itself. Gandhi was aware that a development strategy that is oriented towards villageism alone the reasons for his criticism of the modern civilization was its embeddedness in violence. The extolling of village life must not be taken to mean villages of now. Gandhi was alert to the illiteracy, poorness and diseases of the Indian villages. However he wished to create villages the center of social, political and economic organization as, he would eradicate the inadequacies of the villages. As production within the village are for consumption only, there is no compulsion to mechanize¹⁸.

Gandhi probe for world order, where all countries become self-sustaining, self-directed and self-contained within the production of the required goods and services to satisfy immediate desires of its population. In it no one is a sufferer of his desire for foods and textile. In different words everyone should be able to get spare work to enable him to create the two meals of the day. And this ideal is universally completed only if, the mean of the production of the elementary necessities of life remains within the control of the masses.

Another threat to the world is from ecological degradation. The accountable factors are the exploitative model of development, massive scale technological development, Nuclearisation, warfare and the exploitative attitude of the human being towards the nature. Gandhi identifies it within the sagacity of ethical and cultural degradation¹⁹. Gandhi stressed austerity and the ethical principle in development. In development his focus was on the

poor. He believed in denying oneself what could not be shared with the smallest amount²⁰.

Gandhi practiced what he preached. His life is itself a message for the folks to serve the environment. Our lifestyles are based on high levels of consumption. And high consumption level ultimately leads high environmental harm. It is worthy prefer to recall some of the words of Gandhi concerning more and more wants. He rightly said: We have to put a curb on our material wants. The mind is restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants and still remain unsatisfied. Our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts on such things we would become slaves and loss our moral fiber²¹. The Gandhian philosophy of Sarvodaya is helpful for resolving environmental problems. The idea is interpreted as the "awakening of all". It is additionally related to achieving the best level of self-realization in which one sees one's manifestation in all others²². The Sarvodaya vision of development is equally applicable within the case of environmental protection and conservation. It needs that the total well being of the people must be achieved. This development additionally needs the rejections of capital intensive, machine-oriented and import based mostly economy, because these western notions of development foster a mode of living and a value system that per se critical the one's that the Sarvodaya and the idea of Dharma, that's try and instill with a community.

Conclusion

The world in these days faced with a spread of difficult and complex issues such as widespread violence, wars, arms-race, economic-inequalities, unemployment, ecological degradation, modern weapons of mass destruction and unscrupulous pursuit of material welfare without heading moral values has eaten into the very vitality of national and cultural life. This age of destruction, violence, exploitation and mutual distrust, needs Gandhi more ever than before. The Gandhian life, thoughts, teachings and actions are ever relevant for establishing everlasting world peace and development. His principles and techniques are highly efficacious instruments for strong world order, which is required to resolve all conflicts, which are necessary pre-condition to strengthen our path towards a better, happier and more harmonious world.

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Remarking

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