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Research Paper Philosophy

Mahatma Gandhi On World Peace

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ABSTRACT

The problem of peace has always been the concern of mankind throughout human history. Today the most urgent task facing mankind is the establishment of world peace.

Violence in the form of war between countries of the world is as old as history. But modern warfare of the twentieth century is altogether different from traditional warfare. Traditional warfare always concerned the army and in no way was the civilian population of belligerent nations involved. The scientific and technological progress of the twentieth century has transformed the very nature of warfare. We are passing through a very crucial period of human history. The first half of the present century has witnessed two most disastrous wars, and the creation of anxiety and tension all over the world. These two wars have released terrible energies for destruction. Today, science and violence have joined together not only to destroy the peace of man and society but also to threaten the very future existence of humanity.

Gandhi might be regarded as having visualized a special role for India in carrying out the message of peace because his entire philosophy of life, of which his doctrine of peace is an integral part, is rooted in the tradition and spirit of Indian culture. The contribution of India since the achievement of Independence to the cause of peace and to the settlement of Inter-national disputes by methods of peace may be looked upon as the substantial impact of the teaching of Gandhi on India's relations with the world.

KEYWORDS :

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Violence in the form of war between countries of the world is as old as history. But modern warfare of the twentieth century is altogether different from traditional warfare. Traditional warfare always concerned the army and in no way was the civilian population of belligerent nations involved. The scientific and technological progress of the twentieth century has transformed the very nature of warfare. We are passing through a very crucial period of human history. The first half of the present century has witnessed two most disastrous wars, and the creation of anxiety and tension all over the world. These two wars have released terrible energies for destruction. Today, science and violence have joined together not only to destroy the peace of man and society[1] but also to threaten the very future existence of humanity.

More than that violence in the form of warfare is no more confined to warring nations but involves other nations too. This is because the very nature of international politics has changed. Today any war between two nations may turn into a global war at any time as the world is practically divided into two political or ideological camps led by the two major powers of the world, i.e., USA and USSR.

Despite the dangerous threat of extinction of entire humanity, the nuclear arms-a product of scientific and technological progress, have been reached to such a state that even a small portion of atomic and nuclear weapon would be enough to destroy the whole planet. In such a grim situation, the establishment of peace is the only guarantee for the existence of mankind. And And the leaders of the civilized world have to direct all their efforts and energies to establish world peace and the abolition of war, if they have even an iota of love and commitment to humanity.

After the two recent disastrous world wars, the establishment of world peace has gained a particular urgency. With a view to suspended war and establish world peace the establishment of League of Nations and UNO were the most important steps taken so far. There is "remarkable unanimity among political scientists that world government is the major instrument for the maintenance of world 'peace."[2] However in terms of suspension of war the establishment of such institutions did not produce any substantial results, and the war, if not on global scale between the nations of the world, continues to be a fact today. Thus the suspension of war in order to achieve permanent peace among the nations of the world is still a living issue before mankind.

Mahatma Gandhi was a religious and God fearing man. He wanted salvation not by renouncing worldly affairs as Lord Buddha did, but by serving the humanity. He believed that the service of the humanity is the service of God. With such a conviction Mahatma Gandhi had devoted his life not only to the cause of his people-Indians, but also he had stood for a wider cause, a more far-reaching cause, the cause of humanity itself. And thus he had been working throughout his life for the realization of world peace. To him, "every nation has two-fold vocation: the call to live its own life and direct its own affairs to the best for its own welfare, and the call to live its life as an organ of the great community of all nations and all mankind"[3]. He was, in effect, advocating universal brotherhood as the basis of world peace.

Gandhi, an apostle of non-violent action never approved war-a violent action, as the western pacifists also have been daring. He rejected outright and condemned war as a means of solving or resolving a conflict. According to Gandhi the problem of peace was not just a political problem involving the adjustment or rectification of relations between armed nations. It was the problem of mankind, posing a challenge not only to States but also to every individual human being and human group. He, therefore, endeavoured to establish peace between man and man, group and group and nation and nation.[4]

Mahatma Gandhi was himself a witness to the two disastrous world wars during the present century. He therefore maintained that the major unsolved problem of international relations is war,[5] and so long this problem is not solved, the ideal of world peace cannot be achieved.

To him, war meant inter-state aggression in its widest sense. He opposed aggression and condemned the process of war as an evil, because of its direct or indirect use of coercion and violence. He believed that the process of war is unrighteous because it contradicts 'ahimsa' and the higher law of 'dharma'.[6] He had, in a discussion of war, observed that, "the children of violence will commit suicide and perish unless they turn away from violence."[7].

It was a life long conviction with Gandhiji that "mankind and its civilization can be saved from destruction only through non-violence and that there is no deliverance for the world through clash of arms."[8] Gandhiji insisted that "not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in Godliness of Human nature." He found that methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking."[9] Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that if recognized leaders of mankind who have control over engine's of destruction (instruments of war), were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained.[10]

With such a view of problem, Mahatma Gandhi, "as an effective substi-

tute for the violent, armed warfare, presented the nations of the world with a technique of non-violent, unarmed resistance, popularly known as Satyagrah"[11]. He had a firm belief in this technique for resolving any problem or conflict that concerns mankind. He said that before this peaceful technique, 'the bayonet runs to rust and gunpowder turns to dust. The Satyagraha of his conception has its roots in the twin-principles of truth and non-violence and had a characteristic spiritual quality. Gandhi was of the opinion that 'Styagraha would dominate violent action (war) and it would remove the root cause of the trouble, isolate evil from the evil doer and fight evil with the peaceful weapons of the spirit. To refrain not only from all violence, but from all ill will and bettter thought against an opponent, and to seek continually to win him by love and self-suffering, is the essence of Satyagraha. Gandhiji made it clear that Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family, its use can be extended to every other circle[12] of human association.

Gandhi believed in the peaceful nature of man as he believed in his Godhness. He argued that the individual can become peaceful, so States too possess a similar and equal potential for peace since they are equal to the sum of their citizens.[13] Further he said that if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence, which is the law of the brutes it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man."[14]

It is against such a background that Gandhiji's contribution to world peace has to be appraised. At the very outset one finds that his approach to the problem of world peace was overloaded with moral philosophy of life. It is for this reason that the Mahatma, has been scoffed at by many of his critics as an utopina, blind to the facts of the grim world of real politik. At the same time one has to be cautious while challenging Gandhian philosophy of life and his techniques of action. Gandhi's main aim was the "moral regeneration of human society"[15] in which peace can be obtained. One has to take into account that moral philosophy does play an important role in the regulation of human behaviour. In the same way the application of moral values in regulating the behaviour of nations is also possible. George Caltin, one of the important political scientists, is of the opinion that "the mission of Mahatma Gandhi was to be our educator, and to call the world's attention, (in this age when the wars of the international anarchy became even more hateful and desirucuon of the very body of civilization), of the need for an education in the beauties of Ahimsa."[16] And, if this education in Ahimsa is universally tried it will certainly contribute to world peace in no small measure. One may recall in this connections, Attlee's statement, that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace should be erected.

To conclude, it would not be out or peace to mention that apart from his own philosophy of peace, Gandhi has also advocated certain other measures, such as world government, disarmament and world police to secure peace. Gandhi always, believed in a third party for resolving conflicts whether between men or nations. And so he was of the opinion that there should be a world Government as a third party to resolve conflicts between the nations of the world. At the same time a process of disarmament should be started, because the race of armament is a constant danger to world. And a world police is also necessary as a peace-keeping task force.

Gandhi might be regarded as having visualized a special role for India in carrying out the message of peace because his entire philosophy of life, of which his doctrine of peace is an integral part, is rooted in the tradition and spirit of Indian culture. The contribution of India since the achievement of Independence to the cause of peace and to the settlement of Inter-national disputes by methods of peace may be looked upon as the substantial impact of the teaching of Gandhi on India's relations with the world.

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