
GANDHIAN ETHICS- SWATCH BHARAT-DIET

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Abstract: Gandhi preached what he followed. He first experimented everything with himself. All his philosophy has roots in the welfare of people. He believed in a thing and hence he preached. He suffered his body many times in pursuit of his goals. But from suffering only one is sharpened. While others languished in their narrow pursuits despite being his followers, he was never into any kind of narrow mindedness. Even in occasions he appeared to be like one, who was inspired by his larger interests for the mankind. He strongly opposed division of India into two- Pakistan and India. He believed that division of nation will not result in their coexistence, and it will breed further enmity. He did not celebrate the dawn of independence. He was more concerned about the future of the nation. He was neither in favor of anybody nor moved by narrow considerations. Even the prejudice of being a Hindu is absent in him. He was killed as everyone feared not by a Muslim, but by a Hindu. He was truly a brain-child of great philosophers like John Ruskin (Britain), Leo Tolstoy (Russia) and Edward Carpenter(Britain), whom he described as his mentors. Gandhi is not one thing, he is many things. There is nothing he is incapable of thinking. There does not exist anything that he failed to debate upon. He was an adorable philosopher leader, fitting the definition of Plato and his theory of ideal state. Gandhi is not of his time. He is of all times.

Keywords: Martin Luther King, Experimented, Freedom, Health, Rice-Millers, Non-Violent, Will-Power, Truthful, John Ruskin.

Introduction: Mahatma Gandhi is an extraordinary man looking ordinary. World is celebrating his 150 birth anniversary this year, for a very valid reason. He is one of the most influential people on the earth. Martin Luther King Junior,(America), Nelson Mandela(South Africa), Adolfo Perez Esquivel(Argentina), Dalai lama(Tibet), Aung San Suu Kyi(Myanmar) etc., had claimed to be influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. For every popular revolution, whether it is 'Jasmine Revolution', 'Hongkong revolution for rights' or whatever- Gandhi was the light leading them all. He is the most debated, discussed and every year atleast one or two books are released explaining his personality afresh and seeing him in a new light.

He is a great leader to many. But Gandhi has not become 'Gandhi' we all adore overnight. His strong strength of mind could be attributed to the influence of his mother, Putlibai, who was deeply religious, and of course to the two books he read at school, 'Sravana pitribhakti nataka' and 'Harischandra', one portraying Shravana's love for his parents and the other expounding the merit of 'truth'.

He experimented many things with himself. He ate meat, he stole money, he smoked cigarettes and wanted to be independent thus. Unable to do anything without parents' permission, he even contemplated 'suicide'. He learnt the value of 'Ahimsa' when his father did not punish him when he confessed his act of stealing. Such Ahimsa, he says, turns out to be heart touching as also embarrassing, which later became a strong weapon for him in his fight for independence for India.

His reading of epics like The Ramayana, Bhagawata and all made him search into himself deeper and deeper at every step of his life. He made alterations in his way of living. He was very careful about what he spoke. He says that his speaking little has endowed him with the rare spiritual capacity which helped him speak with a lot of discretion, leaving the ugly and speaking only good of people. At every step of his

life, he tried to be pure, even in his thoughts. He even began to make changes in his diet. For him who valued much the sanctity of body and mind, diet also mattered most. Swatchta of body, mind and soul all mattered the most to Gandhi. Swatch Bharat Abhiyan, a recently launched programme with the participation of about 34 lakh government employees all over the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in fact a program aimed at realizing one of the dreams of Mahatma. This program was implemented by Gandhi for the first time when he was in South Africa. He travelled across the country a 100 years ago, and it was a programme that appeared to him a part of the big exercise that he wanted to undertake- a society without distinctions of caste and a free society. In a meeting held at Calcutta, he was incited to take up broom and clean dirt. That was the beginning for the movement of 'Swatchta' programme. It was essential, according to him, to prevent spread of contagious diseases and as well to remove untouchability, an evil widely prevalent then. 'He wanted toilets to be as clean as our drawing rooms' as he said in one of his meetings at Gujarat.

He believed that 'higher should protect the lower' and man eats not for enjoyment but to live. Writer whom he read said that people should abstain from flesh-meat, and even eggs and milk, and they concluded that vegetarian diet is advisable medically and otherwise. He stopped taking spicy food, sweets, condiments etc. He began to relish boiled spinach which tasted insipid in Richmond. For some time he thought that he could eat eggs and fish, for the reason no living creature is harmed there.

Gandhiji conducted many experiments on diet. He went into things like from where it is coming? How is it processed? How much is eaten etc. Even in his diet habits, he is not overcome by a concern for the welfare of his fellow human beings. He preferred to consume Jaggery to sugar for the reason it helps rural industries. Consumption of sugar will result in the flourish of big industrialists. It was also blessed with many essential food supplements, he said and he asked his statement to confirm with experts in dietary matters.

He also objected to using ghee and milk for the reason both are symbols of exploitation of animals. He also objected to Vanaspati as it is not a natural commodity. Even when he practiced naturopathy, he abstained from taking milk, and he suggested taking milk only on the advice of a doctor only in case of a protein deficiency. He preferred goat milk for it is easily available everywhere on the rural side, that too on the advice of doctors. He also voted against coffee and tea saying that they add upon fresh desires.

He also hated habit of certain people who treat their stomach as a grinding machine and eat something always. Modern living has created for us a system by which we have learnt keep food available every time. It is available and so we eat much. He concluded that eating less is good for health, and of course it has on its back a social concern that while majority go without food that we eat more than required. Hence in all respects he theorized that we have to win over the urges of tongue. He wanted us to eat to live and not eat for eating sake only.

He was also against use of polished rice. Again on its back there is a concern for villagers. They use coarse rice and they are deprived of their living if we consume polished rice. It will benefit the big rice millers who do not till or grow rice but become fat with profits as a result. He cautioned us against the lures of rice millers right in 1940s. He also suggested much usage of fruits and raw vegetables. Raw, uncooked vegetable will result in liberating the heavy work of cleansing vessels in the kitchen and they are rendered free of that enslaving job, according to him. He also advised men to help women in the household chores to lessen burden on women. He recommended usage of neem fruit as it is capable of cleansing the body and advises us to use tamarind in case of its non-availability.

A person may be socially inclined and seek to benefit the society. There are leaders who have fought for the freedom of India and also tried to liberate people of many evil practices like untouchability, satisahagaman, child marriages, restraining entry of dalits into temples etc. There are those who fought for the special rights of select people in the society suffering from injustice. Gandhi is unique for the reason that he is concerned with human welfare in all its aspects. There is nothing that eludes his attention. He seeks their good in every aspect of their life. He wanted them to be clean, educated, broad

minded, loving towards their fellow human beings- men, women, untouchables or whoever, ready to sacrifice, peaceful, non-violent, strong in will power, truthful, healthy in body and mind etc. He preached what he followed. He first experimented everything with himself. All his philosophy has roots in the welfare of people. He believed in a thing and hence he preached. He suffered his body many times in pursuit of his goals. But from suffering only one is sharpened. While others languished in their narrow pursuits despite being his followers, he was never into any kind of narrow mindedness. Even in occasions he appeared to be like one, who was inspired by his larger interests for the mankind. He strongly opposed division of India into two- Pakistan and India. He believed that division of nation will not result in their coexistence, and it will breed further enmity. He did not celebrate the dawn of independence. He was more concerned about the future of the nation. He was neither in favor of anybody nor moved by narrow considerations. Even the prejudice of being a Hindu is absent in him. He was killed as everyone feared not by a Muslim, but by a Hindu. He was truly a brain-child of great philosophers like John Ruskin (Britain), Leo Tolstoy (Russia) and Edward Carpenter(Britain), whom he described as his mentors. Gandhi is not one thing, he is many things. There is nothing he is incapable of thinking. There does not exist anything that he failed to debate upon. He was an adorable philosopher leader, fitting the definition of Plato and his theory of ideal state. Gandhi is not of his time. He is of all times.
