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## Gandhian Philosophy of Satyagrah

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## GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SATYAGRAH : ACHARYA JAWADEKAR

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### Abstract:

*Acharya Jawadekar examined Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy in the light of the vedant philosophy and analysed his concept of Analsakti Yoga (selfless pursuit of life activity). The Acharya thought that the Geeta thought the principle of non-violent Satyagraha and therefore, non violent Satyagraha was a major contribution of Mahatma Gandhi that enriched world thought.*

### KEYWORDS:

Philosophy, Yoga, Satyagrah, Political Resistance.

### INTRODUCTION:

Mahatma Gandhi's thought touched all aspects of life. He viewed life in its total perspective and contemplated effecting basic changes in humor attitudes. His ideas on the methods of political resistance, his theory of state and anarchism, autonomy for villages and decentralization of power aimed at total transformation. Jawadekar attempted an original and creative interpretation of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas. The present chapter studies political thought of Mahatma Gandhi.

### 1. THE MEANING OF SATYAGRAHA :-

Mahatma Gandhi held that the Geeta advocated the philosophy of Satyagraha. Proved to be the most effective and potent weapon to fight injustice, and it became the science of non-violent revolution. Though religion granted the Kshatriyas the right the wield arm for the protection of religion and society, armed might was not the true means of securing justice. A true Satyagrahi endured hardships for truth and thereby re-kindled the flame of devotion to truth in others hearts, and removed week ness. Punishing the evil-doers in the society was net morality. True morality was converting the evil-doers into virtuous.

Mahatma Gandhi utilized Satyagraha as a means of political resistance. He believed that armed revolution was not the proper way for the common man to establish popular government. Independence achieved through armed evolution would surely land the nation in the hands of military rulers and feudal lords. Satyagraha would certainly awaken spiritual strength to create a truly democratic state. 1 In the beginning, Mahatma Gandhi used to call this new technique of non-violent resistance Sadagraha (struggle for the assertion of truth). The main objective of Satyagraha was search for truth, and to struggle to assert that truth.

The word Satyagraha was derived from two Sanskrit roots Sat and Agra. 'Sat' is truth and 'agraha' meant insistence upon assertion of truth. Mahatma Gandhi interpreted the word 'Satyagrahi' as one who endured hand ships to upload the self-realized truth without causing inconvenience the others. Explaining the word Sa+ya 'Satya' Acharya Jawadekar stated that Satyagraha was new form of ancient religion. To insist for truth meant to resist beastly and tyrannical power. Truth was the foundation of society and on the support of this only falsehood, untruth or lie was destroyed. 2 The word 'Sadagrah' did not imply the correct cannottation of the struggle that was being fought in South Africa, which Mahatma Gandhi wanted to

convey. A determined insistence on truth generated spiritual strength. Assuming that 'agraha' (insistence) implied spiritual strength, Mahatma Gandhi began to call the Indian struggle in South Africa Satyagraha, i.e., The spiritual strength born of truth and peace.

Commenting on the fact that the help of intellect, heart and senses was essential in realizing the truth of life, Mahatma Gandhi held that man dedicated himself to the truth with the assistance of the intellect, heart and the senses discovered the truth of life. When mind and heart imbibed truth, he attained peace of mind and could enjoy joys of the material world. Without caring for pleasures he could make this life truthful, contented and happy. Therefore, those who wanted out to be rationalists should control their senses and conquer their mind. 3

The philosophy of Satyagraha was closely related to the reason. Stating that Satagraha was Buddhiyoga or rationalism. Which implied to accept as truth what the reason approved. This distinctive feature of the reason approved. This distinctive feature Buddhiyoga (the result of pure and absolute intellect) and Buddhiwad. (rationalism was that in the Buddhiyoga greater emphasis was laid on purification of the intellect and the purity of intellect depended on purity of heart. The buddhiyoga was based on non-violence and self-control. The rationalists recognized the authority of the reason., the Buddhiyoga laid great stress on the purity of the intellect and heart, which was spirit of Satyagraha philosophy. Since Satyagraha was an exercise of pure intellect and heart it had no affiliation with any particular system or school of thought. Even an atheist could and follow Satyagraha. A Satyagrahi could advocate different spiritual, social and material points of view. The principle of spiritual strength was evolved through Buddhiyoga. 4

## 2) THE SATYAGRAHI SPIRITUAL STRENGTH :-

Truth and spiritual strength were mutually complementary and spiritual strength was necessary for a Satyagrahi. Each one should carry out his own quest for truth independently and live selflessly for those truth realized through self-experience. He should strictly observe truth and non-violence in everyday life. He should shed the elements of untruth in this ideas and accept the truth from the ideas even of opposing systems of thought. He should not accept conclusions drawn under, different conditions within one's own country or from foreign countries on the authority of word. No truth was ever on absolute truth. He would have to suffer hardships to spread and establish truth realized through reason and self-experience. This was called spiritual strength of the Satyagrahi.

Mahatma Gandhi held that the philosophy of Satyagraha was not opposed to the freedom of reason and the reason that was founded on spiritual strength had no fear of confusion. Reason without the foundation of spiritual strength became confounded. The axiom 'truth shall prevail' was accepted in this philosophy. 5

The Satyagrahi had always to have a quest of truth. There were three fields of search for truth, viz., material, social and spiritual. We perceived the external world through the organs of senses. The each for truth in the society was conducted through comparative study of the structure of various social institutions. The Satyagrahi had to discriminate between truth and untruth. The seeker after truth in the field of spiritualism led to the ethics were the mind and intellect became the subjects of study. In this study our mind and intellect became the subject of study. All the theories expounded in the three fields should grow with the help of experience and conjecture. Therefore, the search of truth was always inconclusive. Satyagrahi never laid excessive stress on opinion through he continued to propagate his views. At the same time he certainly reviewed its contents and moment he realized that he had committed the mistake he was willing to armed it, because he was an apsole of truth and not of opinions. He would not accept anything as truth unless it was approved by his conscience. It was the opinion of Gandhi that a pure Satyagrahi was never an obstinate supporter of opinion. There was a basic difference between Satyagrahi and Matagrahi.

The had never bean person who had come to know the whole truth and who had always followed absolute Ahimsa (non-violence) and never there would be one, and Mahatma Gandhi was never, for a moment, under the illusion that millennium the Age of Truth- would ever drawn. It was the duty of the ideal to make man aware of this imperfection and lead him on to the path of perfection. The Gandhians were, therefore, never dismayed if reminded that their dream of the Millennium was too far away. Mahatma Gandhi thought that though the ideal of golden age was distant, he could move closer to it with the help of the weapon of non-violence's. 6

'Sat', the light of truth in the heart was the true nature of a Satyagrahi. There could not be any ideal closer than the truth. And though his ideal seemed too far away to the external eye. It was spiritually quite close to everyone. It was the avowed duty of every Satyagrahi to effect a change in the external world by promoting the spiritual social revolution, and to show the humanity the pathway of spiritual development. There was a state of satisfaction even in sorrow, which was called immortality and several religions.

Originated to explain how this state of immortality overcame sorrow and happiness and sorrow could be attained. The Acharya believed that Satyagraha was Dharma. It was an ancient Dharma. He advocated that truth, non-violence and penance were the essence of all religions, and Satyagraha viewed all religions so far evolved, with equanimity. It was, however a revolutionary Dharma. The world was immortal but everything it was mortal. Similarly, human desire to acquire knowledge was constantly growing and hence it need not be continuously expanded. The knowledge of every science acquired so far had to grow with the Satyagrahi commitment to truth. This new vision of continuous persistence in the quest of truth was given by Mahatma Gandhi. 7

It was the contention of Jawadekar that there had to be close, relationship between facts and ideas, had to be close they were constantly changing and the Satyagrahi who was seeking truth should imbibe the changes. The factual or material world should get reflected in the world of ideas and vice versa. Therefore, along with the changes in the material world the world of ideas should change otherwise the ideas would not be able to influence the material world. A Satyagrahi should understand the dynamic nature of the world and to maintain his commitment to truth he should constantly renew his quest and absorb new findings in this body. Jawadekar argued that the organization of society was the function of Dharma and if failed to continue our constant search for truth, it was possible that the ideas and thought could not get transformed. Hence we should continue to practice the Yajnya of quest truth. 8

### 3) THE RULES FOR THE SATYAGRAHI :-

The Satyagrahi should keep his vow to pursue the quest for truth with determination. Mahatma Gandhi held that the Satyagrahi had to strictly observe the eleven vows. For the establishment of truth self development: Non violence, Truth, Asteya, Celbacy, Manual Labour, Aswad, Fearlessness, Refraining from misappropriation of property, Respect for all religions, Swadeshi and Abolition of untouchability, Mahatma Gandhi believed that observe of these vows would foster among Satyagrahis devotion to truth, truthful behavior, and accomplish self-purification.

#### 1) Ahimsa (Non-violence) :-

Jain, Buddha and Christim religions all advated the principal of Ahimsa, but they did not End avour to eliminate violence which was taken to be inevitable in politics. Gandhism had been trying to eliminate political violence, and creating a new human culture, based on truth and Ahimsa through non-violence revolution, and non-cooperation with war.

#### 2) Truth :-

The quest for truth meant discovering the essence of material, psychological and spiritual world. The hardships one had to endure to devote oneself to truth needed for self-development and the strength generated in that penance for truth. The spiritual strength, and the intellect that was watchful about public interests could alone comprehend social truth or justice. Only selfless intellect could understand welfare of the world. The quest for and establishment for justice was the social form of truth and it was realized through practice of non-violence.

#### 3) Asteya :-

Asteya meant of non enjoying the fruits of social wealth without working for them. Amassing surplus wealth and consuming wealth in excess of one's needs were all forms of thievery. Misappropriating wealth created by labour of the working classes was discordant with the principles of Asteya and Ahimsa. In order to avoid stealing of public wealth one had to work, to enrich the sources of wealth of the society and one had to live on the sweat of one's brow.

#### 4) Celebacy :-

The comprehensive meaning of celibacy in Gandhism was to exercise self-control over the organs of the senses and to make delight in devotion to truth. Mahatma Gandhi held that a Satyagrahi should observe celibacy, and even married Satyagrahi should observe absolute and total celibacy, and abstain from sexual indulgence. Only absolute celibacy could generate the strength requisite for the quest of establishment of truth. A Satyagrahi, therefore, had to take the vow of total celibacy, Mahatma Gandhi knew that it was impossible to observe total celibacy, as it was impossible to realize total truth, but he urged

that it should be the ideal of every man.

#### 5) Asangrah :

Man's acquisitions deviated him from Satyagraha. Therefore, he should take a vow of abstaining from amassing and possessing wealth. It was difficult for a man of wealth to be devoted to truth. Gandhism maintained that a Satyagrahi should return his possessions and sources of wealth to the society, and willingly embrace poverty as a way of life.

#### 6) Manual Work :-

Everybody should earn his bread, Not only that but in order to remove social inequality brought about by the division of labour, and in order to avoid harboring of the snobbish tendency to look down upon the working classes, doing manual labor, everybody should undertake some productive manual work. The followers of Gandhism took up symbolic labour of spinning yarn on the wheel (Charka) as an on going sacrifice. That included the principles of self-help and social equality.

#### 7) Aswad : (Not to be slave of tastes)

The man should not become a slave of his tongue and avoid addiction to good spicy food. Gandhiji always believed in simple living and high thinking.

#### 8) Fearlessness :-

It was not a vow, but was a mental attribute of a true devotee of truth and strengthened his devotion of a truth. Satyagrahi should live his life without fear and boldly face the fear of royal wrath, the fear of death and even that of religious persecution. He should be willing to suffer in the cause of truth, but should not bend his knees. A coward could never become a Satyagrahi death and even that of religious persecution. He should be willing to suffer in the cause of truth, but should not bend his knees. A coward could never become a Satyagrahi. Gandhiji held fearlessness very important and hence he argued that he favored violence to cowardice.

#### 9) Swadeshi :-

It was a vow to using only those goods which were manufactured in our own country and boycotting those made abroad. This was an economic movement aimed at the imperialistic economy. Equal respect to all religions eliminated violence born of intolerance towards other religions. Eradication of untouchability got rid of the snobbish tendency of superiority complex nurtured by the castes and races. It aimed at ending segregation in the society this vow was advocated with a view to fostering development of all castes and religions in cooperation with one another. The vows of Swadeshi equality of religions and eradication of untouchability were advocated in the Gandhian ethos as symbols of self-purification. The creation of a new non-violent society was the objective of the devotees of truth who had taken these vows of Swadeshi equality of religion and eradication of untouchability.<sup>2</sup>

Acharya Jawadekar held that the revolutionaries attempted only to effect external changes in social structure, and change the economic and political institutions. Mahatma Gandhi, however, laid a great stress on the revolution of the inner soul. For it, if the feelings of devotion to truth and love were not kindled in the heart it would be impossible to create a new man and world.

Acharya Jawadekar thus made a very incisive study of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha. He critically examined the Gandhian tenets of insistence on truth, the authority of self-experience, purity of means, and the eleven vows to be followed by the satyagrahi. It was Mahatma Gandhi's desire to use the instrument of Satyagraha for political objectives and expounded the principles of political resistance through several Satyagrahi movements he launched.

#### 4) SATYAGRAHA AND POLITICAL RESISTANCE :-

Since removal of injustice was the objective of Satyagrahi movements, Mahatma Gandhi took them as the means to political resistance. Such a movement was launched when the government committed injustice. Its end was to establish justice and to make both the people and the government just and non-violent.

### 5) SATYAGRAH MEANS TO ENDS :-

The objective Satyagraha was to make the people non-violent, and devoted to truth. It was essential to employ pure means to realize this objective, Mahatma Gandhi believed that the objective realized through bad means could not be just and good. Acharya Jawadekar maintained that the science of ethics was a science of duties. And the science of ethics insisted upon purity of means. Therefore, this political means purified by truth, Ahimsa and love, enjoyed a singular prominence in Gandhian political thought. 11

Gandhi held – that the purity of means increased spiritual strength of man because the higher ideals require equally higher means to achieve them. There was a basic difference between the justice acquired through spiritual strength and that acquired through armed power and violent revolution. It was a proven fact that the latter normally became corrupt and deviated from truth. It was for this reason that Mahatma Gandhi insisted that revolution should be brought about with the help of non-violence, non-cooperation. A Satyagrahi should show willingness to endure sufferings and hardships. Once, that spiritual strength was imbrbed in the society, no tyranny, however beastly, could ever triumph over it, and even the mightiest rulers had in the end, to submit to unified spiritual strength of the people. Acharya Jawadekar believed that the revolution brought about by spiritual strength was continuous and permanent. Every nation had to produce revolutionaries who were initiated into the science of establishing truth through Ahimsa. 12

Acharya Jawadekar laid a great stress on the purity of means. The means of Ahimsa and spiritual strength had to be employed in the society, and for that purpose ideals of morality and spiritual strength had to be inculcated in everyone in the society. Mahatma Gandhi attached great importance to purity of means.

External reforms were shaped by internal reforms. Hence the means and the ends were inseparable related and the principle of purity of the means was is important to the external revolution as to the internal revolution. 13

Mahatma Gandhi never regarded political revolution as his only end or objective. Democracy was the objective of the French Revolution, as Communistic rule was the objective of the Bolshevik Revolution. Mahatma Gandhi maintained that both the revolutions failed in realizing their respective objectives of establishing democracy in France and Communism in Russia., because both the revolutions resorted to armed and violent means. He hoped that democracy and socialism could be established in our country if we succeeded in bringing about a non-violent revolution. It was from this point of view that Mahatma Gandhi endeavored to bring about a total non-violent revolution.

Mahatma Gandhi maintained that in our private and public life we should use fair and just means to attain the different types of goals. His ultimate objective was to establish self-rule, and he was aware that the means to attain that objective would get evolved through Satyagraha alone, so he regarded Satyagraha as the essence of all religions. Acharya Jawadekar held that Communism and democracy were political systems; they rose, prospered, disintegrated and came apart with the passage of time. But pure, fearless love and penance, devotion to truth formed the true elements of ancient religion. This was the eternal and lasting truth. 14

Mahatma Gandhi gave important place to the problem of means to ends in the conduct of Satyagraha. If the means were pure the ends, too, should remain pure. This was a part of our ancient morality. that was plundering the community. It was more dangerous than feudal lords. It fostered an illusion of eternity and invincibility. The feudal lords of the viddle Ages enslaved only the bodies of the people, but their modern capitalist counterparts destroyed their souls by the exercise of the deadly poison. The situation was very dangerous.

These two means were employed to light this danger – (1) Reformism and (2) Total armed revolution. Both had proved totally ineffective and important, for they treated the external symptoms of the social evils but never touched upon the root cause of the social ailments. The exponents of reformism and armed revolution fondly believed that by partial external reforms in many social institutions in the prevailing political system, they could end the social evils. The root cause of all social catastrophes was to be found in social imperfections and impurities, not in political systems. The waves in the sea were not the cause of storm but it was the storm that caused the waves. The principal function of political systems was to eradicate the defects in the society. To eradicate social evils, we must teach people to purify their souls and not to cooperate with injustice. Self-purification was an important means to reform society. Self-purification and non-cooperation were the two principles of Satyagraha.

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