

The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi: From Porbandar to World Transformation

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Abstract- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as Mahatma Gandhi, had a profound impact on the globe via the leadership he provided for the Indian independence cause as well as by his life and morals. Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, British India, and his extraordinary rise from a humble upbringing to national hero is a tribute to the transformational power of nonviolence, the truth, and unflinching resolve.

Gandhi's early years were affected by his upbringing in a religious family, where he learned the Jain traditions of his area from his mother Putlibai and internalized their compassion, vegetarianism, and tolerance for one another. His adult life would be significantly shaped by these early influences, as he became a supporter of nonviolence and civil disobedience.

The idea of Satyagraha, or "truth force," which Gandhi turned into a potent weapon for resistance against injustice and tyranny, was at the heart of his ideology. His commitment to the nonviolent concept of Ahimsa formed the foundation of his life's work and his legacy. Gandhi's unshakable dedication to these ideals served as the cornerstone of his leadership throughout the Indian independence struggle.

Gandhi set out on a quest to unite peasants, farmers, and city workers to fight against egregious land taxes and prejudice after returning to India in 1915. After assuming control of the Indian National Congress in 1921, he launched national initiatives to combat poverty, advance women's rights, encourage interethnic and religious peace, abolish untouchability, and encourage economic independence. His main objective was to free India from foreign rule, or to attain Swaraj.

Gandhi's 400 km (250 mi) Dandi Salt March in 1930, when he and a group of supporters opposed the British-imposed salt tax by making salt from seawater, is one of his most well-known actions. This instance of nonviolent civil disobedience attracted global attention and demonstrated the efficacy of nonviolent resistance.

Gandhi's dedication to nonviolence, meanwhile, extended beyond his involvement in political conflicts and into every aspect of his life. He exercised self-sufficiency by spinning his own yarn on a charkha (spinning wheel), leading a humble lifestyle, donning traditional Indian garb, eating a straightforward vegetarian diet, and living simply. Long fasts were effective measures of social protest as well as self-purification.

Tragically, Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist who believed Gandhi had compromised India's interests, murdered Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948. He Ram (Oh God), Gandhi's last words, reflected his unshakeable faith and dedication to nonviolence even in the face of violence.

Gandhi left a lasting legacy. His monument, Raj Ghat, in New Delhi, has the understated yet meaningful epitaph "He Ram." This represents the character of a man who lived his life in service of the truth and nonviolence and who not only inspired India but the whole globe. His birthday, October 2, is observed as Gandhi Jayanti in India and is regarded as the International Day of Non-Violence across the globe.

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi's life and ideas have inspired people for many generations. His early inspirations, ideology, leadership, and ultimate sacrifice for the cause of nonviolence and independence have all been touched upon in this essay. Gandhi's legacy serves as a reminder of the tenacity of compassion, truth, and peaceful action in the face of tyranny and injustice.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Non-violence, Indian Independence Movement, Satyagraha, Ahimsa.

Introduction:

Gandhi presided over Congress for over thirty years and had a greater impact on India than any other single person. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to argue that this one guy changed the course of India's history and had an impact on the whole planet. A character of considerable charm and perplexing complexity was hidden under an unremarkable persona with a reedy voice, affable demeanor, and perceptive expression.

Gandhi was one of those people who hid meaning in a profusion of explanations while concealing thinking in the loudness of his words. He often had to justify himself and was never taken seriously. He persuaded people whose interest was captured by one aspect of his personality or another that he was either a zealot, a visionary, a master strategist, a saint, a prophet, or a con man. He is still a mystery to this day; the only thing we can be certain of is the extent of his impact on the people and events of his day and afterwards.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in 1869 at Porbandar, the capital of a little Hindu kingdom and a port on the Kathiawar Peninsula in western India. The young Gandhi thus had a hereditary tie to politics, even authoritarian ones, and state service since his father was the hereditary dewan or prime minister of the state. Gandhi was not a Brahmin, unlike so many of the other leaders of the emerging India.

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He came from the Vaishya or merchant caste, popularly known as banya in the north, which in Kathiawar and Gujarat had close connections with the dissenting Hindu sect of the Jains.

In the Jain religion nonviolence to every sentient being is an article of faith, so that we can at once see one origin of the later Gandhi's characteristic doctrine. As a youth he was sent to London to study, and duly qualified as a barrister-at-law. His departure and return provoked a crisis in his community; one half considering that he had lost caste by crossing the ocean to unholy regions. While in London he came into touch with liberal and Christian ideas and the then novel teachings of Tolstoi about noncooperation with evil and violence.

For a time he practiced law in India, and then proceeded to South Africa, where the new Indian community formed by the immigration of indentured labor to Natal provided opportunities to a young professional willing to live abroad. He stayed in South Africa until he was forty-six, and it was here that he matured in thought and character. He raised his family, conducted dietetic experiments, to his family's discomfort and occasional dismay, and developed his philosophy from a mixture of Hindu, Christian, and general humanitarian ideas. He proved a Moses to his own people, applying conciliation to their disputes, often to his own hurt, and providing leadership when racial feeling grew and the new Union government acted like a Pharaoh that knew not Israel.

In the South African war he led a corps of stretcher-bearers on the battlefield and won praise for his courage. In 1912-13 he disciplined and led his people in a passive-resistance movement against discriminatory race legislation. His method of conflict without violence and resistance without hate caught the imagination of another great man, General Smuts, and led to the conclusion of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement.

It was in the reflected glory of this achievement that the now mature Gandhi returned to India at the beginning of 1915. He went to his guru, G. K. Gokhale, at the headquarters of his Servants of India Society in Poona. Gokhale advised him to watch and learn for a year before venturing into speech or action. Before the year was out Gokhale was dead. Gandhi tried out his nonviolent technique on several limited issues before the challenge of the Rowlatt bills came along.

From the foregoing it will be seen that his methods were no dramatic surprise, nor was the man a brilliant youth who flashed on a startled India like a comet. It was not a case of new men and new methods so much as tried methods by tried men in a new sphere. Gandhi's main obstacle was the prejudice expressed in a South African version of the query, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" For Gandhi's secrets we must go to his South African, British, and Porbandar days. Between 1916 and 1920 Gandhi climbed to the leadership of Congress over the live body of Tilak, all the time protesting his admiration for the older man.

The process was so characteristic that it is worth a moment's consideration. In 1916 Tilak, at the height of his reputation, captured Congress and seemed to have united a new realism and caution with his old fighting spirit. Just over three years later his policy of co-operation on terms was set aside in favor of Gandhi's all-out nonco-operation. Why were the people so fickle? The change symbolized a radical transformation in the whole Congress outlook. Tilak was a man of the middle class advocating the more advanced of two policies. He was a Brahmin and an aristocrat (in the Hindu sense). He appealed to the people, but as a superior to his dependents, not as an equal and one of themselves. He played upon racial pride and orthodox feeling; he postponed social reform until "after independence."

Though homely and familiar in manner, he was remote and Olympian in popular conception. He and his class called for obedience from the people rather than co-operation. There was as yet, except in the matter of traditional beliefs, no organic union between people and the middle class. Gandhi, on the other hand, was by origin one of the people. The vaishya was third in the table of the four Hindu caste divisions, denied

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the respect given to both warrior and priest. Though brought up in the middle class and given a Western training, he had identified himself with the poor and the underdog from his early South African days.

In his sanitary campaigns he would clean latrines himself, a duty thrust by Hindu society upon untouchables without the pale of respectable society. A man of the new class, he came and lived among the people on their own terms, Early in 1921 he discarded his Western clothes in favor not of the ascetic's saffron robe, but of the peasant's homespun loincloth and dhoti. While Tilak was to the people a Brahmin calling for respect and a politician immersed in strategy, Gandhi was something more than a Brahmin, a holy man, and something more than a realist-prophet who appealed to moral principles which as Hindus they understood.

Gandhi made himself poor like a peasant, and the people made him holy like a saint or guru. This subtle exchange was ratified by the popular accord to him of the title Mahatma or great soul. We may add that Gandhi had a far greater understanding of popular psychology, both Indian and British, than Tilak. He knew instinctively the moments and the issues which would both stir his own people and embarrass the British most.

We have finally reached one of the key causes for Gandhi's influence on the nation. He served as a link between the middle class and the general populace, transferring energy from one to the other. him, and practically alone him, was responsible for transforming Indian nationalism from a middle class movement to a widespread sentiment including all classes. His charm was his ability to identify with the populace, profound comprehension of them, tact, and an appeal to moral idealism as it was interpreted by both the British and his own populace. His first point of contact with the populace was the previously stated voluntary poverty.

It was widely accepted, secular, and decidedly anti-Brahminical. Instead of expecting the populace to make gifts to him, Gandhi offered himself to them. He was rewarded by their increasing dedication. His vegetarianism followed, which was in line with the social mores of his caste.

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campaign in support of hand spinning, khaddar (handspun cotton), and swadeshi (produced) products. He picked the charkha, or hand-spinning machine, whose emblem today appears on the national flag. Many peasants, who stood to lose by their liberation, did not support his battle on behalf of the untouchables, whom he dubbed Harijans or Sons of God. However, it stressed human equality and dignity, which had the effect of elevating the status of the caste peasant in both his own eyes and the eyes of the rest of the world. And it immediately elevated Gandhi to the position of protector for the fifty million Hindus who had previously been excluded from Hinduism.

Though it would be absolutely foolish to assume that popular Hinduism is a peaceful religion, his nonviolence touched a sympathetic chord since the notion is deeply ingrained in Hinduism. Gandhi's religious language and practices were all chosen with the intention of appealing to the finest aspects of popular religion and everyday life. He was well-versed in both the Gita and the Bible; he adored devotional music, including Christian hymns; he hosted prayer gatherings everywhere he went; he resided in an ashram or religious retreat; he supported and engaged in fasting for self-purification and penance; and he engaged in silence on one day each week.

He was similar to a historical bhakti saint who spread religion to the populace while demonstrating devotion to his Lord in numerous ways. He was able to accurately adapt contemporary methods of action into Hindu idioms. A one-day political strike is a hartal, which is a moral protest, and passive resistance is satyagraha, which is a crusade for truth. Resistance to the government is noncooperation with evil. He attacked the salt tax, the one levy that every peasant hated, and suggested its illicit production when he sought to incite opposition to the government.

All of the current political strategy's tools were converted into language with a taste of righteousness that the average person could understand. Such actions may be argued to have fatally cut Gandhi off from the politically aware middle classes. The majority of them disapproved of it, and only a small minority devotedly adhered to his methods. They6 | Mahatma Gandhi continually

irked an academic like Nehru who was used to the West. However, despite the fact that many members of the middle classes disliked Harijans, prayer sessions, Gita courses, and hand spinning as a requirement for Congress membership, they endured them.

For starters, despite how smart many claimed to be, they continued to hold on to or hold "under-the-counter" beliefs in the benefits of fasting, meditation, and the fundamental Hindu principles. They were aware that they needed him since no one was capable of summoning and managing the populace in the same way as he did. Then then, there wasn't a more cunning strategist in the conflict with the government. Gandhi was the only one who had the timing and skill to stir up the populace. Additionally, he was the best at making the British feel uneasy by criticizing them in the name of their own beliefs. To face up to his enemies, the British citizen needs a clear conscience just as the British military needs a full stomach.

Gandhi was not a socialist, to sum up. The upper classes felt secure in his care and that he was pleasantly and not very ardently Hindu. In the 1930s, hundreds of lawmakers believed that independence was well worth a rapid and spinning wheel. Henry IV of France once stated that Paris was worth a mass. With his cheery disposition, contagious grin, high ideals, and shrewdness akin to a lawyer, this half-naked tiny guy continues to be a mystery in both his mind and his daily activities. Was he really the Messiah

that many Christians and Hindus believed him to be, or was he just a series of shifts and shuffles? We can only make educated assumptions since the individual with the wisdom to expose his soul has not yet materialized.

First, one must make a choice about one's own internal truthfulness. We may now think about whether his ideas are effective if we accept this, which I believe we must. From here, we may go on to his two main tenets: ahimsa, or nonviolence, and satyagraha, or "soul power" or more precisely "truth force." These Sanskrit phrases can't be translated accurately because they have philosophical and religious connotations that are lost in English. It is possible to say that the core principle of satyagraha is the source of ahimsa, or nonviolence.

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Gandhi had many ideas on nonviolence, and this "tier" method of thinking has been ripe for misunderstanding. At its most basic or fundamental level, to put it another way, it was a political ploy. Violence in the name of independence would set back Swaraj, intensify British opposition by placing them on solid footing, and alienate the public. Because it worked and produced results, those who could not practice nonviolence out of belief of its fundamental truth were urged to do so. They should have faith "for the sake of the very task."

This peacefulness was often motivated by expediency. The employment of nonviolence as a moral strategy was the next part of it. This idea was shared by old Hindu hartals and obsessive fasts like sitting dharna, who believed that it was a better way to do good than using physical force. Gandhi's philosophy was three levels deep, with nonviolence as its highest level. It referred to a spiritual appeal between souls; it sought to convert an adversary on the inside via the force of love and sorrow. This idea served as the inspiration for Gandhi's fasts and became more and more motivating as time passed.

It was the tenet of his devoted followers, known as Satyagrahis. It was significant enough to alter the perspectives of many visitors who came to berate and intimidate adversaries like Irwin and other Englishmen. Swadeshi, or self-sufficiency, was Gandhi's second tenet. He supported the idea of a rural, self-sufficient community that relied only on agriculture and local handicrafts to meet its requirements. He encouraged hand spinning and weaving to further this goal. By opposing imports from elsewhere and living a modest existence.

Modern business or the era of the machine has no genuine place in this vision. Gandhi, though, was realistic enough to make the most of the situation as it was. He would graciously accept the gifts from the Indian mill owners while emphasizing that they would be utilized to eliminate their need for continued existence. These concepts originated from Hindu traditions, maybe with some support from organizations like the 81 Mahatma Gandhi

Tolstoi-like seers and Quakers. Gandhi's nationalism was undoubtedly an imported idea. It was broad and powerful, incorporating not just Muslims but also other non-Hindus and members of all castes.

He disagreed with the orthodox on this particular point, and it was because of his views on Muslims that a ferocious Hindu fanatic eventually killed him. His endorsement of democracy, with its conviction that every man is essentially of equal worth, went along with nationalism. Although he did not advocate for caste differences, he did struggle against caste limitations. He stood up for the untouchables above everything else.

He was never pardoned for this by the orthodox. He was by no means consistent in his application of the idea, and in the case of his wife in particular, it seemed that he upheld the customs that he abandoned in the case of other women. Gandhi maintained that serving others must be done on a personal level in order to live a fulfilling life—this is possibly the most significant point of all. Even after attaining truth, according to Tilak's interpretation of the Gita, active activity in the world is still required. Gandhi understood Tilak to be referring to doing acts of personal service for others. The Sermon on the Mount, which he never got tired of reading and reciting, was used to support this.

In general, Hinduism has prioritized contemplation over action, just as the West has prioritized activity over reflection and self-realization over service. Gandhi's example, which was also impacted by missionary work, has contributed more than any other single factor to social service and welfare, helping to establish the idea that a man is his brother's keeper in contemporary Hindu culture. This might end up being a crucial step in the future in reorienting Hinduism as an active ethical ideology.

Gandhi's influence on Indian ethics and daily life as well as the broader area of the fusion of Eastern and Western philosophy cannot yet be accurately assessed at this time. However, we can evaluate his impact on India's political evolution. It is obvious that the British imperialists' greatest friend throughout the 1920s and 1930s was also their worst foe. His influence was largely responsible for maintaining peace in India during those years of inevitable conflict.

She might have easily turned into a sizable terrorist organization or erupted in a violent uprising under other leaders, which would only have resulted in extensive persecution, postponed independence, and left a painful legacy. It would have jeopardized India's whole relationship with the West. Gandhi developed a nonviolent revolution strategy that, in actuality, mainly succeeded in preserving the good will among the fighters that he taught.

Gandhi's strategy was to pretend to be constitutionally unlawful, to use a paradoxical expression. Even among those who have served many jail sentences, like Nehru, very few illnesses will survive. In the grand scheme of things, Gandhi's ability to moderate his more fervent supporters and keep the party free of actual terrorists was just as significant as his talent and cleverness in confounding the British. Gandhi's second accomplishment was turning the Congress into an instrument really representative of the country, a political microcosm of the national life. It came to be associated with the majority of the progressive groups in the nation as a consequence of his strategies and attitudes at different points in time.

The Congress ran a unique program for general education. Through its anti-government actions and the inclusion of figures like Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in its leadership, it came to be intimately associated with the struggle for women's freedom. Gandhi's campaign for the Harijans was, in the eyes of the Congress, unofficial; but, because of the Mahatma's fame, the public effectively associated it with the Congress. While the peasant had his Kisan sabhas, concern for the new industrial worker was represented through Congress-sponsored trade unions and the Congress-socialist organization.

With the Bengal School of Painting's revivalism, even the arts had a nationalist undertone. The steadfast adoption of moral ideals into politics was Gandhi's third contribution.

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