

The Relevance of Nuclear Weapons in Gandhian Thoughts

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ABSTRACT

After Second World War there was a major change in the functioning of inter-politics by great powers. The prime cause was the emergence of nuclear weapons. Winston Churchill even called it balance of terror. In fact, nuclear weapons acted as balance between the so-called super powers i.e., The U.S.A and the Soviet Union. Critics claimed that nuclear weapons were a deadly and devastating weapon that could ruin the whole world. Non use of nuclear weapons has made the world a more secure one. Gandhiji was alive when nuclear weapons were used in war against Japan. He saw the objective pursued by using the nuclear weapons to end the Second World War was against his philosophy. The article deals with Gandhi's approach to war and peace and tried to find solution by peaceful method.

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INTRODUCTION

The utilization of nuclear technology is indeed, the need of our time, but when it is used for the development and welfare of human being it has bad repercussions. If it dictates terms then the very existence of human being is endangered. As such one will witness a new form of feudal society in which nuclear aristocracy will exploit the non-nuclear serfs as i.e. an imbalanced society will be established. In order to build a peaceful world order, it is necessary to have some logic of the causes and issues which are mainly responsible for leading the social structure into anarchy. The sources of this imbalance can broadly be divided into sub strata of individual and social behavior motivations and the strata of institutionally; generated passions, compulsions and temptations that make nations go to warlike situations.

It is quite clear that these dangerous situations arises because of the aggressive nature of human being or the anarchical state of the community of states combined with the temptations of geopolitics, insecurity and the accumulation of arms, the irrational urges of nationalism, the Damoclean sword of the nuclear bomb, colonial and imperialist greed, ideological fanaticism these provide counter urges and proactive responses to control or even to eliminate. These awesome situations. In search of this sort of human being Gandhiji provides us way s and means for a peaceful non-violent society (Pyarelal, 194 8) which is based on love and affection instead of hatred and mistrust. An effort has been made establish that the maladies with which the modern world is affected and can bind an abiding solution in Gandhism. Gandhism is a panacea for all evils. Gandhism is relevant even more than it was, because,

Gandhi can never become outdated or obsolete, due to his entirely fresh and novel perspective.

For his philosophy is basic to the purpose of life and living. Gandhi, like Albert Einstein , the great scientist, General Douglas Mc Arthur, Nobel laureate, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Dr. Rajendra Prasad who in their own right could be regarded as great men and have shown light to the world. Gandhi view was that the basic problem of our society is the problem of individuals. Elaborating upon this he said that "most people exist, one should live and to live is a rare thing." (Gandhi, 1948) Therefore, Gandhiji's thinking and techniques of social change involving a complete overhaul of the existing socio-economic-cultural-political order is an answer to to-day's problems and threats before mankind.

THE PARADOX OF ATOMIC AGE

Bernard M. Baruch has rightly remarked, "Science has taught us how to put atom to work. But to make it work for good instead of for evil lies in domain dealing with the principles of human duty." (Baruch's, 1945) Research on a wider scale involving the sociology of nuclear technology is the need of our time. We are indeed living nuclear age. It has revolutionized the entire foundation of human affairs and has placed humankind in a situation of measureless and laden with doom. On one hand, atomic inventions paved ways for the progress of humankind on the other hand it shocked men into a measureless of tremendous stakes in the issues of international politics.⁴ In the 20 century even after the introduction of nuclear weapons warfare continues to dominate the pattern of

conflicts. Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been, as of today, the only, instances when nuclear weapons were actually used in war. They used at a time when the Americans had a monopoly of such weapons. (See H.Fies and Len Giovannitti's book, 1947) The Soviets were to develop their first nuclear weapon in 1949, followed by the British in 1952, then the French in 1960 and the Chinese in 1964. Of the recent countries that entered openly this nuclear club are India and Pakistan in 1998. Today, Israel and North-Korea are, suspect having nuclear weapons. Reports are there that North Korea has tested hydrogen bomb. In the context of the two super powers nuclear weapons, however, did place limitations on the concept of total war that had been the feature of the two great wars. (Bolyllis and Smith, 1997)

In the nuclear age, we can perceive the sea-change in the psychology and technology of conventional war.

As we can realize that conventional warfare has evolved with the technological changes, we have entered into the fourth generation warfare methods when unlike the earlier generations of warfare, the entire society is seen as a battlefield. (Kaldor, 1997) In this phase, there is a decreased dependence on centralized logistics and use of banner and technologically sophisticated armies. The objective of this warfare is to deter the enemy rather than defeating it in an all out war. While atomic weapons have not been used since the end of the Second World War, there has been a significant improvement in their design, their destructive power and their sophistication of design. Given the phenomenal destructive capability of such weapons if used by the warring countries, and a realisation that any conceived nuclear war would only end up destroying both the warring countries along with a general destruction elsewhere, strategic thrusting about " nuclear war has revolved around their non-use rather than their use." (Booth et al., 1987) Regain the monopoly of the 1950s. The technological advances claimed by the proponents of the programme did not materialize and eventually the programme was reduced in scope and size. (Garnett, 1970) In this present scenario as long as the idea persists that the possession of nuclear weapons brings power, prestige and illusion of security, such weapons will remain with us. It is only when we accept the fact that nuclear weapons pose a universal danger to human civilization, we can then move towards safer and saner world.

PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR WEAPON

The age in which we live have very rightly been termed as the atomic age and the way it has been ushered in and the deep implications it has had on the world, has been the most dramatic in human history. Only a few months before the discovery of nuclear fission in 1939 several eminent scientists were of the view that nuclear reaction can hardly be used for economic energy production and yet within three years after this great discovery, a chain reaction had been set off. (Smoke, 1958) It was yet to be proved that nuclear coin has a beneficial phase also. The problem which surfaced was related to some new uses of atomic energy viz the peaceful use of nuclear explosions. This aspect has been unfortunately associated with military uses so that the possibilities have not been fully appreciated. It is only recently (Hambargar, 1970) that more details of such uses are being made available, so that it is now possible to take stock of the situation more comprehensively than before. The fact of the matter is that had nuclear explosions not had any relations to weaponry and radio-active fallout was not there, it would have been an ideal civil engineering tool for many earthmoving operations. (Higgins,

1970) Without even considering several mining operation, the arena is still very new and much remains to be done from the point of view of research and development.

GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

In case of Gandhi philosophy of war and peace the problem is more of ethics than of physics. Because we try to fulfill our desires through science and technology, but we fail to attain them completely. Generally we are guided by our greed and selfishness which are the root- causes of our miseries and troubles. Gandhism is panacea for all evils which beset mankind today. Our seers and sages were strongly motivated by the unique natural conditions of this country to seriously think about the relationship between, human beings and nature, between nature and God, between inner-self and outer reality, between this world and the other world etc. After seriously meditating on these issues for thousands of years, they could experience the oneness of mankind and longed for well-being of all beings and enjoined upon the inhabitants of Indian society to devote themselves. They accepted the entire globe as a family, preached universal brotherhood, advocated co-operation and collaboration and prohibited people from doing any such act towards others as they would not like others to do on to them. Gandhiji thought that principal objective conditions for human progress are social peace and international co-existence and he further assumed that national and international levels can be successfully can be achieved only through a non-violent and peaceful method which he described as 'Satyagraha'.

SATYAGRAHA

But Gandhi's idea of social progress was based on the basic assumption that human progress is possible only if man is recognized as ethical and spiritual entity. (Shil, 1985) Therefore the dignity of individual and his rights as an ethical being must be respected if any meaningful human progress is to be achieved. Accordingly, Gandhiji was committed to certain ethical values which he wanted to be realised in the new world order of his vision. In this regard, he visualised true democracy -which can be realised in modern world only through 'Satyagraha' and the enforcement of system of human rights through peaceful means. He further conceived that if politics is regarded as the art of regulating the social relations of mankind, if it is regarded as the art of determining social or civic rights and duties, then 'Satyagraha' is a novel political technique for regulating the social relations of mankind and, therefore, may be regarded as a new technique for establishing a new social order to reduce conflicts and bring peace for mankind in different national political systems, or for that matter, in the world as whole. Gandhiji thought that his technique of Satyagraha was the practical method of application of his moral, social and economic ideas in the world whereby the existing world order could be transformed into a new world which would ensure peace, justice, prosperity and happiness for mankind. (Bose, 1957) Gandhiji wholly disapproved the doctrine that the end justifies the means. The purity of motive can never be substitute for the priority of means. The Ahimsa that Gandhiji preached and practiced so successfully all his life is not a quality that he associated with weakness or helplessness. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. He would prefer violence to cowardice for there is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. The lesson to learn from his life and teachings is that one must bear no ill-will or enmity towards any person. No individual should

be regarded as an enemy. It is the poison-within him that we should fight and which we must put an end to. Gandhiji made no distinction between the morality of individual conduct and the morality of groups and nations. If violence is bad between individuals, it is equally bad among nations. In Satyagraha, which is based on truth and non-violence the personality of the exploiter is given due respect. At the moment of triumph neither the stigma of defeat nor pride of conquest is felt. Here, it is quite clear that Gandhiji's faith in love and suffering was indeed deep. The most effective way of converting one's opponent to one's point of view is by means of gentleness and persuasion and not by coercion in the punishment of others and just political order. The end of non-violence is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent. (Kumbhe, 2000)

THE BASIS AND EFFICACY OF SATYAGRAHA

The Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha is a natural outcome of the supreme concept of truth. The word 'Satyagraha' is derived from words 'Satya' and 'Agraha'. It, thus, means firmness in the cause of truth and determination to find the truth. Gandhiji considered truth as the law of our being. We should assert the truth as we have understood it. But we cannot know the whole truth we should not therefore enforce others to submit to our position. We should rather suffer ourselves, it will convert our opponents. Both of us will arrive at a more right position. Our method of asserting the truth should unite the people, it should not hurt anybody. The evil should be fought but the evil doer should be assisted in right thinking. It logically follows soul-force against all injustice, oppression and exploitation. Suffering and trust are attributes of soul force. Satyagraha is, thus, pursuit of truth by non-violent means which induce voluntarily imposed self-suffering and self-restraint. The essence of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence is the pursuit of truth. In the lifelong pursuit of truth, we must always be guided by love, compassion, understanding and respect, allow everything we have to interact positively with the elements and help create a society of peace and harmony. The more possessions we have to secure them from those who covet it generating feelings of jealousy and the desire to take by force what the needy cannot get through compassion. (Gandhi, 2000) Thus, Satyagraha means the exercise of the purest soul force against all injustice, oppression and exploitation. Suffering and trust are attributing of soul-force. The active non-violent resistant of the 'heroic meek' makes an immediate appeal to the heart. It wants not to endanger the opponent but to overwhelm him by the over flooding power of innocence, love and compassion. Its stupendous effort at conversion can be applied both against the government and the social czars and leaders of orthodoxy. But here one should be always prepared to bear all kinds of suffering. As Gandhiji said, "If Hampden and Wat Taylor would not have been-able to bear suffering; they could not raise the standard of revolt." (Young India, 1923) Gandhi never conceived that Satyagrah is a formula of social and political disintegration. But he was convinced that a Satyagrah must have first rendered willing obedience to the laws of the state. He writes 'A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has, thus, obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just, and which unjust and iniquitous, only then does the right accrue to disobedience to certain laws in well defined circumstances (Gandhi, 1997). Gandhi insisted that a satyagrahi is by nature law-abiding and the capacity for civil resistance

comes from the discipline by obeying the civil and moral laws of the state.

APPLICABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Satyagrah is applicable at all times in all the situations. The type and technique would of course, differ. It can be used by men, women, physically weak or strong or even by the children. Gandhi was firm on his conviction that Satyagrah could rid society of all political, moral and economic evils (Socialism and Satyagraha, 1997). The techniques which were applied by Gandhi may include Fasting, prayers, hartal, picketing, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, processions, dharanes etc. The techniques can be evolved depending on the situation. Fasting, according to Gandhiji; is a spiritual act. It has to be applied only against those who are bound by ties of close personal affection; it is yearning of the soul to merge with divine power. Undoubtedly, absence of food is an indispensable part of fasting but its more important part is prayer which creates a state of communion between God and the person on the fast. Hizarat or voluntary migration is another form of Satyagrah. It literally means leave one's place. Tyranny is a kind of plaque and when it is likely to make us angry or weak it is wise to leave the scene of such temptation. Gandhi supported hizarat and quoted that "The exodus refers to the planned flight of the Israelies and in Russia there was flight of Doukhodhobors who were non-violent. (Harizan, 1940) But he was not in favour of the 'scorched earth' policy to be a form of Satyagraha and ruled out underground activities even though entirely innocent as" part of legitimate flight for freedom based on truth and non-violence." (Press Statement, 1944). Gandhiji considered strikes or hartals as symptom of unrest. He approved of them as inherent rights of the working class for securing justice until the employer agree to arbitration. In the contexts of students, he favoured only those strikes which were orderly and non-violent, not resulting in any kind of obstruction of passage of fear and terror. Non-cooperation movement was another strategy adopted by Gandhiji against the arbitrariness and oppression of the state and its agents. It refers to withdrawal of cooperation from the corrupt state, land lords and Zamindars. It is very powerful instrument to bring about desired changes in the unjust policies of the ruling class. Its success depends upon the realization of its significance by masses and willingness of people to undergo sacrifice. It has to be necessarily non-violent. Another popular means of Satyagrah which was adopted by Gandhiji was civil disobedience. It means disobedience of laws which are against the general interest of common people and which are likely to cause unnecessary hardship to them. Non-cooperation with the evildoer is a mild form. Civil-Disobedience of the laws of the government is a strong and extreme form of Satyagraha. Gandhi meant by civil, in the concept of Civil Disobedience, a sense of discrimination discipline, civility and non-violence. There can be individual as well mass civil disobedience. For individuals there is always scope for it except when it is certain that it will lead to bloodshed. Mass Civil obedience - which is spontaneous is to be exercised in a peaceful atmosphere. In the beginning masses will have to be rigorously trained for action. Gradually, they will learn this art. Gandhi was of this opinion that complete Civil disobedience implying refusal to render obedience to every single state-made law can be very powerful movement. It can become even more dangerous than an armed rebellion because the stupendous power of innocent suffering undergone on a great scale has great potency. By bringing the scrutinizing glare of public opinion on the evils of an autocratic state. (Harizan, 1940) The fall even of a despotic political regime is ensured. Swadeshi is a kind of spirit which requires

the preferred use of things produced in our neighbourhood vis-a-vis those which have come to us from distant places. It helps in serving people living near us. However, it does not permit to have any ill will towards those who are distantly manufacturers. Gandhiji noted only two limitations of Satyagraha. Firstly, it cannot be used by the weak. It is a weapon of the brave. Satyagraha should become a way of life. Then, only it can be effective as a method of action. Secondly, it cannot be used to defend wrong cause.

CONCLUSION

In essence, we find that Gandhi ridiculed the idea that destructive power of the atomic weapons would prevent future wars. He wrote, "It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in ahimsa (non-violence) as nothing else can... (However) the world will return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out -... So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might... The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that counter bombs will not destroy it even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence." In this context, it is worthwhile to quote Albert Schweitzer, who praises Gandhi's realization that the only real forces at our disposal are the spirit of freedom from hatred and the spirit of love. He further admires Gandhi's insistence on ahimsa? 'Ahimsa is the principle high uplifted above all politics. Gandhi transforms ahimsa from being a world denying tool into a world affirming one.' Schweitzer himself used non-violence as an argument in his endeavour to stop nuclear testing and nuclear proliferation. Ultimately one can argue that Gandhi was the champion of the universal human values, the most important ones of which are the world peace, the sanctity of all life, the spiritual development of every individual and better treatment of animals and most importantly - the pursuit of truth. Great Nobel laureate Schweitzer affirms: "Because I have confidence in the power of truth and in spirit, I believe in the future of Mankind." Both Gandhi and Schweitzer believe in similarity of the life-style, the value of manual labour and the interconnectedness of theory and practice; Schweitzer is famous for saying; 'My life is my argument, while Gandhi entitles his autobiography 'My Experiments With Truth. Therefore, the only path which remains before mankind to bring conflict resolution in the society is a path of peaceful co-existence as advocated by Gandhiji. Thus, Gandhiji felt the development of nuclear weapons and destruction cause by it has no place in his philosophy.

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