



Gandhi as the Icon for the Today's Youth

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Abstract:

The present paper is a humble attempt to focus on certain peculiarities of Gandhian ideology which can enable the present youth to mould their character. The discussion of Gandhian ideology is a need of time because the modern age is the age of knowledge, there is dynamic progress in each and every field of life due to rapid progress of knowledge. This drastic change has been resulted into cut-throat competition. Thus the present youth, who are the hope of future, have become restless, disappointed and to extent heartless because of hatred, jealousy violence, suspicion and misunderstanding. They are, thus, suffering from the unknown fear of insecurity related to their existence. This is the most sensitive stage of life where Gandhian thoughts can certainly be the source for inspiration for them because these thoughts are divine, potential enough to uplift the life as Sri Aurobindos says; "Life must blossom like a flower offering itself to the divine."

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The modern age is an age of paradoxes. Two world wars have been fought 'to end wars', but the shadow of the third is haunting us. The sky all over the world is coloured with hypocrisy, suspicion, hatred, misunderstanding and cut-throat competition. This situation has certainly made the present youth, who are the hope of the future, restless, disappointed and to extent heartless too. It is the most crucial stage when only Gandhian thoughts can be the source of inspiration for the youth. For the Gandhian thoughts can be the path-finder for the youths. It is due to certain features found in Gandhiji that he is revered and looked upon as the icon for the today's youth. Rabindranath Tagore aptly says; "Gandhiji is a great man-a-great soul. He today wields tremendous power over the teeming millions of India." (GAWKH:53)

There was something in Gandhiji which drew youths to him for advice and guidance. Gandhiji had a great faith upon the inner potentiality of the youth. He firmly believed that if the youth could be moulded properly, they would surely do well. His belief is quite true to the present youth because this is an age of mounting tensions and conflicts. In the midst of there, the youth is faced with many problems and is confused with many problems and is confused and upset. Here Gandhiji functions as a source for inspiration for the youth in order to exist and establish themselves against old circumstances.

Gandhiji stands as a great rebel who revolted against the set rules and traditions of the society. He is certainly a true romantic in literary sense who protested against all established conventions without bloodshed and without animosity. He applied non-violence as the weapon because he considered non-violence as a logical corollary to the principal of truth. As he writes; "Ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two side of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc." (GP : 63)

Gandhiji shows the value of Indianness to the youth through his sense of identity with the Indian people. Though he studied at England and worked in South Africa, yet he never showed a sense of alienation to his own motherland on returning India. Today when the youth are very much eager to build up their career abroad, Gandhiji through his simple living and high thinking conveys a message how to serve for native land. More so Gandhiji advocated the handicrafts, the handloom and the cottage industries in order to avoid materialism from life and generate for hard work. This led him to help the youth aspire for the simplest things in life.

Gandhiji stands as a visionary with his firm convictions for the youth of today. He was a man of an iron will yet he was always open minded who never rejected others arguments as well. He was a seeker of truth who believes; "... I found that the nearest approach to truth was through love I found, too that love in the sense of ahimsa had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth.... God is truth and I should say truth is God." (YI-31-12-31) Gandhiji advised the students to keep faith in God and to fight desperately and valiantly against untruthfulness, uncharitableness, violence, sensuality and other sinful thoughts.

Gandhiji had a lot of faith in work culture. He therefore, insisted the youths not to participate in party politics. If they indulge in such activities they cease to be students and will therefore fail to serve their country in its crisis. Gandhiji wanted the youths should be trained from hand, heart and head. Thus he advised the youth to be self reliant by learning a craft or occupational skill for livelihood. He gives challenges to the youth so that they can realize the 'self'. Gandhiji believed if the youth could sacrifice their comforts and conveniences, no allurements should deviate them from their mission. This is the dynamic thought for the youth.

Gandhiji convinces the youth the way how to struggle against corruption, abuse of power and money, selfishness, communal frenzy, act of immorality etc through self confidence. Really speaking Gandhiji has been a maker of history whose thoughts can instigate the air of self confidence among the youth 'Satyagraha' and 'Swadeshi movement' of Gandhiji are able to kindle in the millions of youth the great virtue of self confidence and self reliance. Gandhiji writes about the fundamental principle of Satyagraha; "that the tyrant whom the Satyagrahi seek to resist has power over his body and material possessions, but he can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of Satyagraha was born from a knowledge of the fundamental truth" (YI-21-5-31) Gandhiji also defined swadeshi as, "the spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote." (YI:27-5-31)

Gandhiji put stress on inner potentiality of the youth. Thus, he advocates the doctrine of Brahmacharya as he writes, "Brahmacharya properly and fully understood means search after Brahmin. As Brahma is present in every one of us, we must seek for it within with the help of meditation and consequent realization. Realization is impossible without complete control of all the senses. Therefore Brahmacharya signifies control of all the senses at all times and at all places in thought word and deed." (COS:04)

The present youth is going to perish the life on one hand by indulging free sex attitude then Brahmacharya checks them and leads towards perfection.

Gandhiji's self suppression and courtesy are universally recognized and become the source of inspiration. He has scarcely ever been known to give angry expression to his feelings. He always reveals a message of what is public duty. When he was arrested first time, he received the news that his youngest child was desperately ill and he was asked to go to phoenix. But he refused saying that

his duty lay in Johannesburg where the community had need of him, and his child's life or death must be left in God's hand. This is the best example for today's youth how to act in course of life.

Gandhiji believed in Moral beauty which is the pivot of the present time. Moral beauty is exceptional and very striking phenomenon. This form of beauty is far more impressive than the beauty of nature and science. It gives to those who possess its divine gifts, a strange, an inexplicable power. It increases the strength of intellect. It establishes peace among men much more than science, art and religious rites, moral beauty is the basis of civilization. Gandhiji writes "To me the greatest artist is surely he who lives the finest life." (YI:13-11-1924)

There was one great quality about Gandhiji namely, his self-less service to his country. He never aspired to be the President or the Prime Minister of his country after which everybody now-a-days aspires and enters into a cut throat competition with one another. The reason is that we have become too selfish, too mean, too hypothetical etc. we thus badly need the resurrection of Gandhi at this hour to teach us again the alphabet of harmony, unity, self sacrifice, simplicity, sincerity, purity so on. If we do not change our ways of thinking, our ways of living, our ways of dealing with one another. We shall fall a prey to some hungry nation which is waiting to swallow up us.

It is to say that Gandhiji become a world celebrity in his own time and now he belongs to eternity. Gandhiji was already an institution in his own life time and now he is the originator of a whole system of Ideas and Ideals which can guide the youth of today. Gandhiji can give the answer to all the challenges of his age if the youths are able to understand and interpret him and apply his methods to the needs of today. Let us hope that through Rethinking of Gandhian thought, may the rising generation be imbued with the spirit of truth, ahimsa and self sacrifice, the fundamental ideals of Gandhian leadership, may every Indian youth aim at becoming another Gandhi!

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