

Actualization of Love through, Ahimsa and Karma Yoga of Mahatma Gandhi

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Abstract

“In the Karma-Yoga no effort is ever lost, and there is no harm. Even a little practice of this discipline protects one from great fear of birth and death.”

–The Shrimadbhagavad-Gita

The world keeps changing. However, there is one thing that remains unchanged, namely the underlying of all existing changes. Love is the basis of that. What Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated in his day was the manifestation of love itself. When his time demanded that love be the basis of his struggle to free his people from colonialism, freeing millions of marginalized people, Gandhi actualized it into the political movement with the principles of ahimsa and truth. Today, the world continues to grow and demands have changed. The value of love taught by Mahatma Gandhi must be transformed into another form. Peace to be achieved by the community is done differently. Collaboration and networking with a foundation of love in building a peaceful society are the current models. Gandhian as a social worker is required to be able to translate Gandhi's values into this form. Therefore, he will be a Karma Yogi whose body, mind and soul are in harmony. Through karma yoga, Gandhi's values can be manifested. And to achieve this, cooperation is the key.

Keywords: love, karma yoga, Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi was a great educationist, thinker, humanist and an apostle of peace of 20th Century. He was one of those personalities whose theory and practice had similarity and one was supportive of the other. The basis of his theory and practice, as all know, was non-violence. “You probably know that credit of coining a new word non-violence, in English goes to him as he used it in South Africa for the first time and it was accepted as a synonym of ‘Ahimsa’ Prior to it, nonviolence had not been mentioned in any dictionary. I am not going to discuss here why he coined this word and the reasons of it, but would like to quote what Gandhi himself said about it. He has

written, “Nonviolence is a term I had to coin in order to bring out the root meaning of...’Ahimsa’. It is the soul force or the power of Godhead with us.....therefore it can never mean passivity...Nonviolence demands infinite courage that surpasses the bravery of the soldier”.

Life continues to change over time. This is a truth that cannot be avoided. Therefore, everyone must make preparations continuously. The suffering experienced by most people is actually nothing, but only a consequence of their inability to prepare themselves for change. Life that moves with time must be responded wisely. People can not oppose it, because this is a natural law that has been determined so. As Krishna stated in the Bhagavad-gita, that life has been set out to act. So, whoever denies this nature will be crushed by the vortex of his own life. Every person must be ready to take action in accordance with the situation and the needs of his era. They must dissolve completely in the laws of the universe. Only then can one realize his peace and happiness.

Krishna calls this karma Yoga. A perfect union to the Supreme through daily actions. The stronger the union, the more he finds himself. When the real self appears, then all suffering will disappear by itself. A peaceful, happy life filled with happiness will manifest itself. So thus, the thing that is most needed by the community at the moment is awareness of the importance of being involved in world life. Mahatma Gandhi is the most ideal example. In fact, because he is so ideally, he has always been the main reference in terms of humanitarian demonstrations. The Universe works perfectly, selflessly and with full dedication. Likewise Mahatma Gandhi had completely dissolved himself in it. His presence on the world stage later became an icon of the universal law.

Like what karma yoga is done in the context of the struggle for humanity, then Mahatma Gandhi is the most ideal example. This ideal condition will certainly remain a spirit of the times. Whenever the spirit is always in tune with the times, it's just that the shape changes according to the context of the era. At that time, India needed equality and independence from puritanical and colonial thought, Gandhi played a central role in building human consciousness and continuing to inspire others. The British must admit that Gandhi was not a weak person, even though his struggle did not use force at all. Gandhi understood the universal principle that the unlimited power of the natural principle is a power that cannot be defeated by any power. The moral

expression that he did was capable of igniting shock and expanding awareness of the importance of an equal and peaceful life.

The value of ahimsa and satya which became the foundation of his struggle finally led his career to the top. It is not easy, and even the obstacles faced are as great as the success they get. Human unconsciousness caused by ignorance is a universally decomposed engineering. The darkness that surrounds it is not easy to disentangle. Only when people constantly turn on the light of their successful life. And even when we want the darkness to be more widely illuminated, the nodes in each person must be stimulated. What Mahatma Gandhi did was nothing, but tried to stimulate as many people as possible to ignite his own light from within. This is the work intended by Krishna. Everyone must be stimulated to do karma yoga. His life must provide light for his surroundings and gradually be able to turn on the nodes of light around it, so that the light that is present is more widespread. Wider darkness can be illuminated.

To Mahatma, Truth was God and Non-violence was religion. At this memorable trial for sedition in 1922, he said: Non-violence is the first article Of my faith. It also, the last article of my creed. In nonviolence bravery consists of dying, not in killing. His compassion and humanity were as boundaries as the universe. “Gather together”, he said, “ under one banner all men from all religions, and races of India and infuse into them the spirit of solidarity and oneness to the utter exclusion of all communal and parochial sentiments.” And again, “My Hinduism is not secularism. It includes all that I know to the best of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Truth is my religion and ahimsa (the principle of nonviolence) is the only way of its realization.

Karma means Action. Any mental or physical action is called Karma. The result of this action is also called Karma -the Sanskara that we carry from one birth to another, i.e., the baggage of our past actions becomes our destiny in each new birth. Hence, the import of this philosophy of Karma extends from our worldly actions to the principle of cause-effect. Whatever we do, say or think has an effect on our conscious and subconscious mind, soul, environment, and the universe as a whole. Based on this concept, Lord Krishna laid down the principles of Karma-Yoga in the Gita to perform right thought and action. Our destiny is predetermined only by our Karmas. As the arrow left from the bow is sure to hit its target if it is thrown in the right direction, similarly our Karma is sure to affect us depending upon the intention and thought with which it is performed. Here we need to understand the difference between Karma – action and Akarma –no action. Each of Karmas bearing fruit does not mean we should

refrain from performing it at all, but performing it righteously. Again, Karma can be classified in two categories: Sakama Karma –Action with the desire of results and the Nishkama Karma –Action with no desire of results, i.e., selfless action. The Philosophy of the Gita propounds the precept of the Nishkama Karma –selfless action to be free from the cycle of birth and death to attain the goal –salvation. ⁱ

The *Gita* inspired Gandhi to begin his life path of becoming a Karma yogi, and a man of action (Fischer 35-36). For Gandhi, religion was embodied in *dharma* (righteousness) and was the “sustaining order which upholds the individual and society and in turn has to be upheld by them” (Chatterjee 18). Thus religion was simply a moral framework for the conduct of daily life (Nanda 24). Gandhi eventually came to realize that religion played an important role in politics (Nanda 24) and was critical in maintaining a stable society (Chatterjee 18). After a period of 21 years, Gandhi returned to India, armed with his new religious views and powerful political weapon: the *satyagraha*.

If this ideal condition can be successfully carried out, then the world will naturally become peaceful and happy. Violence on behalf of anything will stop on its own, because violence in reality never exists. Whatever tragedy happens in the world is only a consequence of the absence of illuminating light. The bright mind are those who understand correctly the principles of nature that are peaceful, nonviolent and happy. Therefore, Gandhi invites that violence need not be resisted, because it does not exist. Something that does not exist cannot be resisted. The more people fight against violence, the more violence there will be. What must be done is to start turning on the light of your own mind and look inside. When people are able to see inside themselves, love is present. Imagine, if love is present, where is violence?

The absence of love is the cause of violence itself. So that it can be said that what must be continually grown is love and there is no need to be busy fighting violence. Karma Yoga will occur only when people struggle in love. In the context of today's increasingly complex world, the most appropriate action to take is collaboration together. People must build a wide network to knit and foster love. A social worker who underlies his principles from Mahatma Gandhi's life must see this need. Connecting souls who both want to build their civilization must be done continuously. If there is a bridge between them and they are able to collaborate in presenting a bright light, surely there will be a great power for that purpose.

Hopefully !

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