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JOURNAL
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF MUMBAI
(A UGC - CARE Listed Journal)

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Parineeta Deshpande
Ambarish Khare

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THE ROAD TO THE CULTURE OF NON VIOLENCE

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“Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for nonviolence. – Gandhi MK

Brutal Physical Strength or Determined Mental Strength or Spirited Soul force... Which is the strong one? The pursuance of truth for the above question will lead to the culture of nonviolence. The road to the culture of nonviolence is different from establishing other cultures. Its success lies in empowering learners to internalize and apply it rather than memorizing it and writing it down on an answer sheet. It should inculcate the spirit of non-violence in the minds of the learners. Ahimsa goes beyond non-killing and harming other beings, and has many dimensions. The boundaries of non-violence have widened; Inexhaustible; tenderly indulgent. Ahimsa is taught in all religions; they are often described as individualistic disciplines. There is a need to move from individual purity to collectivity. There is an imperative to move from individual liberation to social liberation. This requires a proper understanding of non-violence; even more important is the transmission of that understanding to the next generation. In recent past, MK Gandhi had the audacity to undertake such an attempt. He had the soul power to preciously imbibe the power of non-violence. Gandhi's role in taking non-violence to a new dimension was immense. A life-long messenger of non-violence, he had given us his life as a message. The lesson of non-violence cannot be learned without Gandhi. Hence this article is an attempt to absorb nonviolence in Gandhian Perspective and to analysis how non-violence can be transformed from an individual moral code to a collective cultural code.

Key Words: Soul Force, Law of Love, art of dying, Centripetal Force, Structural Violence, Conscience Centric

The Meaning of Ahimsa: In general, Ahimsa means non-killing or not harming others. But for Gandhi, it is not only a negative state of not harming others but a positive state of Love and compassion. It represents the attitude and mode of behavior towards all living creatures based on the recognition of the underlying unity of life. Gandhi considered, Ahimsa has to be the highest duty, is not merely a theory but based on extensive experience. He believed that Ahimsa is the attribute of the soul and recommended everyone to practice in all affairs of life. One can express Ahimsa through acts of selflessness. In the process, there is no room for Anger. According to him, “Hate the sin and Love the sinner”. In this sense, Ahimsa can be defined as

Ahimsa is about building positive relationships based on respect, understanding, acceptance and appreciation; it was about eliminating exploitation of all kinds and creating harmony among people where compassion and commitment to principles would be the ideal by which People live.

The Science of Ahimsa

Gandhi has pinpointed the nucleus of non-violence. He saw non-violence as a unifying force of life rather than confining it to a narrow circle of non-killing. Our Earth is made up of atoms. If there were no bonds between the molecules of those atoms, earth would disintegrate into Pieces. Its focal point is cohesive force. This force gives life to a lifeless matter. Like atoms, organisms require a cohesive force to live that is called Ahimsa.

“Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we cease to exist; and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction”.

The bond of our humanity is love. This is the universal law. Whenever this rule is violated, war is inevitable. Gandhi says that future wars will be more disastrous than the present one.

If love or non-violence be not the law of our being . . . there is no escape from a periodical recrudescence of war, each succeeding one outdoing the preceding one in ferocity.

Gandhi sought to unify the energies of the human race. His desire is for that energy to be harnessed by love. He considered that to be the universal law. Love is a bond that leads to the development of all humanity without any discrimination. It never fails. Collaborative development is always better than competition. Collaborative Excellence is also the competitive spirit between the centripetal force and the centrifugal force. But this spirit determines human existence in the Earth.

I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal.

Faith in Ahimsa

Our lives last in the midst destructive forces. These destructive forces can be replaced only by means of creative force. We should believe in this eternal law of universe. Our journey should be in the direction of creative force. Conflicts between the People and the society is the nature of life. Human culture is determined by how we face these conflicts. Gandhi believed that the formula for overcoming conflicts is to use non-violence not only towards those who love us but also towards those who hate us.

“It is not non-violence if we love merely those that love us. It is nonviolence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do?”

Gandhi pointed out that ‘acting outwardly as non-violence without fully embracing non-violence is worse than violence’. A follower of Ahimsa should bind love by intention, mind, knowledge, body, word and deed. He should have absolute faith in nonviolence without expecting any reward.

Unless there is a hearty cooperation of the mind, the mere outward observance will be simply a mask, harmful both to the man himself and to others. The perfect state is reached only when mind and body and speech are in proper coordination.

Power of Ahimsa

Einstein measured that "Taken on the whole, I would believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men in our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit...not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in what we believe is evil." As Einstein said, we should understand that 'violence is not the solution to every problem.' Cowardice is submissive to injustice, whereas nonviolence is the courage to resist it.

Gandhi believed that "nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence." On the road to a culture of nonviolence, a high level of spirit is required; competitiveness requires spirit, but coexistence needs an even higher spirit. He felt, "The day the power of love overrules the Love of Power, the world will know Peace". The "love of power" will lead to the House of Imitation. That Society will turn into greed and selfishness. The rights will overcome the duties. One cannot find any altruistic values that will produce violence in society. The individuals enjoy the sophistication without any contribution. But at the same time, the "Power of Love" will lead to the performance of conscious duties. There will be a deep desire to serve without reward. It will yield Nonviolence and Peace in society. The benefit will reach the group rather than an individual. This is known as the Advanced or the spiritual stage of Human Civilization.

Training for Nonviolence

"Those who love peace must learn to organize as effectively as those who love war."

Prior to the practice of non-violence, we need a thorough understanding of violence and nonviolence. Direct violence comes easily to our mind, such as killing and maiming other lives with weapons. But we tend to forget the far worse structural and cultural violence. In 2021 the global military expenditure is 2113 million US dollars which is been recorded maximum amount spent in a year ever. There is no sign of this number decreasing in the near future. This 'abundant' amount, can met all the basic needs along with education, employment and health care problems of the people across the globe. Denying above basic necessities is more dangerous form of violence than the direct violence. The problem is we focus on striking the branches of evil and forget to strike at the root of evil. In other words, Nonviolence will strike at the root of the evil whereas violence will only strike at the branches of the evil.

Variety of training are given to the armed soldiers such as how to handle modern weapons, physical fitness, self-defense etc., These are more vigorous and Dynamic in nature. But there are not enough training workshops on non-violence beyond a few seminars and classroom lessons. These days, the search for non-violence is a superficial intellectual endeavor. Training on Nonviolence needs same level of vigorous and dynamics if not more. As Gandhi told "Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, one must learn the art of dying in the training for nonviolence". The following of quote shows that Nonviolence is not a passive resistance alone but has to be the highest form of action.

“The doctrine that has guided my life is not one of inaction but of the highest action.”

Objectives of Nonviolence Training.

The effective training on Nonviolence must focus on following Eight key objectives.

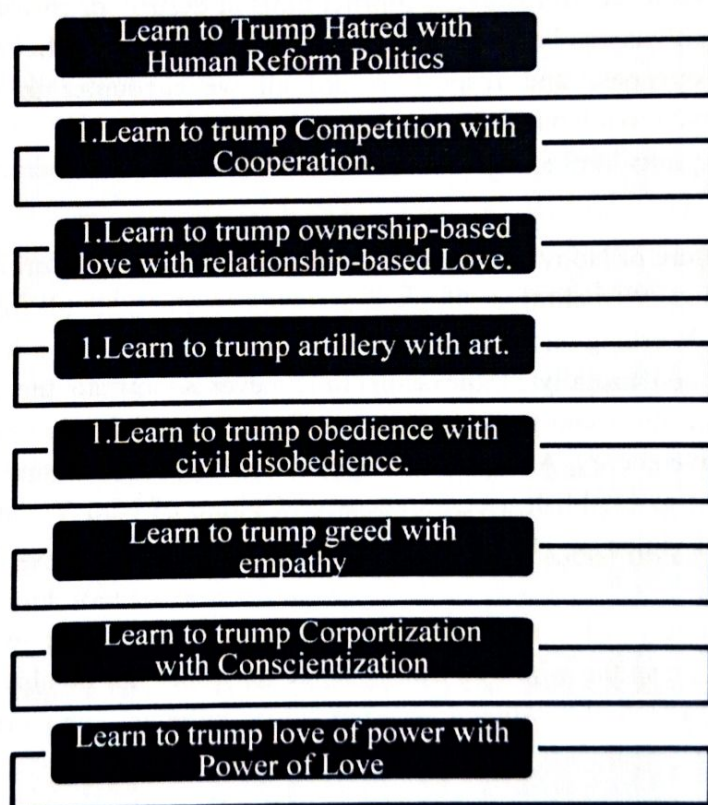
Objectives of Nonviolence Training

Requisites for Training on Nonviolence

Unadulterated self-sacrifice makes one a master of non-violence, the spiritual power, just as hard exercise ensures equanimity. Nonviolence means willingness to accept suffering without any retaliation.

The richest grace of ahimsa, will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline

Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge. Hence nonviolence is a matter of courage. He or she has the courage to live ethically and morally.



There is no win or loss in practicing non-violence. Do not defeat or humiliate or marginalize the opponents. Rather, convert them into a friend in the right understanding. It doesn't mean you are supporting their actions.

Without Ahimsa, Gandhi believed that it is not possible to seek the truth. Truth is the End; Nonviolence is the Means. The cheapest way to build an ethical and moral society is employing on the culture of Nonviolence. The outcome of the culture of Nonviolence will yield the desired result. Ahimsa is the highest form of religious experiment. The true test of non-violence lies in our attitude in the loss of our loved ones and the most difficult times.



Finally, in the culture of Violence, to resolve a conflict aims at destroy or restrict opponents whereas culture of nonviolence, conflicts can be used to transform and transcend for better understanding. Our attitude will be one of openness and respect toward all we encounter in our actions. 10 Point Requestees for Training on Nonviolence

Conclusion:

On the road to Culture of Nonviolence, one should understand that Working for Nonviolence is not employed on non-killing or to eliminate wars, must work to eliminate all forms of exploitation of People. Needless to say, Working on Ahimsa is not a short time affairs, it's a way of life. One has the courage to live ethically and morally at the same time never submit to the injustice even during calamities. Nuclear fusion is more energetic than nuclear fission; similarly, creative energy should have more energy than destructive energy. Ahimsa is that creative energy. Gandhi said if only each one of us makes a concerted attempt to establish a comprehensive Culture of Non-Violence by looking at the eliminating every aspect of violence. Hence Ahimsa should be the highest force than brutal violence as Gandhi told

"Non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul force or the power of Godhead within us. Imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that Essence-he would not be able to bear its full blaze, but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within us, can work wonders".

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