

GANDHISM- AN ATTITUDE NOT A DOGMA

2

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Gandhism cannot be identified with any school of western political philosophy like liberalism, socialism, anarchism and communism in spite of the fact the features of all such theories may be traced in his social and political philosophy. And yet we may place Gandhism in the category of religious or philosophical anarchism in view of the fact that he denounces the nature and character of political authority and instead ultimately goes in favour of an ideal society without any instrument of coercion. As an eminent writer says 'Gandhi is a philosophical anarchist, because he believes that his end can be realized only in a classless and stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on non violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness and in the largest measure on local and individual initiative instead of centralisation.'

The religious or philosophical anarchism of Gandhiji can be traced in these directions:-

a) **Denunciation of state:-**

Gandhiji looks at the state as an engine of violence and exploitation that kills the sentiments of service and sacrifice. He repudiates the usefulness of state on every ground—philosophical, ethical, historical, economic and political. His argument is based on the point that the compulsive nature of political authority

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mutilates the moral values of the human actions. The state destroys what otherwise comes from the force of conscience or consciousness. As he says, "The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but the state is a soulless machine ;it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence." Again Gandhi says "I look upon an increase in the power of state with greater fear, because while although apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying the individuality which lies at the root of all progress."

b) **Indictment of parliamentary Democracy:-**

Gandhiji rejects the system of parliamentary democracy. He ridicules parliament as a "sterile woman". Like Carlyle, he recalls it a talking shop or an institution consisting of self-seekers and hypocrites. It is an organization that has done nothing useful of its own accord and always suffered from fickle-mindedness and uncertainty.

c) **Appreciation of Ramrajya**

Gandhiji desires a new kind of social and political order ensuring complete justice and equality. In such an ideal condition of life there would be no discrimination between a prince and a pauper, a barrister and a sweeper. The state would continue to exist in this society ,but it would be perfectly non-violent organization. The scope of state activity would be reduced to the minimum possible extent. Some institutions like army, police ,bureaucracy ,courts would continue to function but for the sake of common welfare.

The kingdom of God on earth would come to prevail ,there would be sovereignty of the moral authority of the people and the state as a structure of violence would go. I would entail the kingdom of love, justice and righteousness and stand on the basis of complete non-violence. There would be fructification of

moral spirit and the abolition of tensions, conflicts and egotistic interests. Sympathetic accommodation, non-coercive organisation and spontaneous cooperation would be the characteristics of this ideal society. Everyone would earn his honest living. The society would be classless and also without violent state. It would consist of a number of a number of self contained and self regulated village communities. Every village would have a panchayat having full powers of administration and capable of meeting all its essential needs even to the extent of defending itself. The pattern of life would be simple and civilisation has a rural character. Moreover, there would be complete decentralisation of authority. Voluntary cooperation would inform the institutions of social life and it would appear that men have acquired complete personal swaraj or grown accustomed spontaneously to observe their social obligations without the operation of the existing violent state.

It is obvious that, like anarchists, Gandhiji desires a new social system ensuring complete freedom, equality and justice to all with capacity of man to resist the abuse of authority, wherever it occurs, by means of 'Ahimsa' and 'Satyagraha'. However, while realising that this condition of life would always remain an unrealised and unrealisable ideal in entirety. Gandhiji indicates the direction rather than the destination, the process rather than the consummation. The structure of the state that will emerge as a result of the non violent revolution will be a compromise, a *via media*, between the ideal non violent society and the facts of human nature.

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