

The legacy of mahatma gandhi assignment

[History](#)



The Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi Mohammad K. Gandhi, born in 1869 to wealthy parent's, became a well known Hindu intellectual who led the Indian people in a boycott against British rule and a movement for independence. The harsh oppression of the British Colonial rulers in India and the strained relationship between Hindus and Moslems would have led to uprisings, riots, and even wars if not for the philosophy and guidance of Gandhi (Bullet, 680). Known as “ Mahatma,” or “ great soul,” to his followers, Gandhi is credited with leading his followers in a nationalist movement for independence (Bullet, 680).

Mahatma Sandhog's life and message for the world is distinctly marked by three key aspects: his philosophy of non-violence, his strategy of non-cooperation as seen in the Salt March, and his method of communication by fasting. Gandhi operated in South Africa and India as both a politician and a religious saint. Armed with a “ weapon peculiarly his own,” Gandhi developed a philosophy of non-violence which he coined Straight (Fischer, 35). This term comes from the word Stay, meaning truth and graph, meaning force (Fischer, 35).

The term, therefore, directly translates o “ Soul Force,” and meaner “ adhering to the truth” (Fischer, 35). In describing his own philosophy, Gandhi himself wrote that Straight “ is the vindication of truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self” (CTD. In Fischer, 35). By truth, Gandhi was referring to love, an attribute of the human soul (Fischer, 35). With this philosophy, Gandhi essentially reversed the eye-for-an-eye policy and instead attempted to defeat opponents with patience, sympathy, and trust.

Armed with this philosophy, “ in South Africa and at times in India, Gandhi showed that ordinary unman beings were capable of high mindedness even under very irritating circumstances” (Fischer, 35). This policy propagates an implicit trust in mankind, which was sometimes shaken to its core, especially after the bloodbath at Amourists. On the Sikh Basilisk festival day at Clinically Bag, Amourists, between ten and twenty thousand Indians had gathered from surrounding villages to attend the festival and traditional fairs.

As the unarmed crowd listened to a man “ on a raised platform” in the Bag, General Dyer and fifty armed soldiers showed up and began firing on the crowd which included women and children. In total, “ 1 , 650 rounds were fired” (Fischer, p. 66). This massacre resulted in 1, 516 casualties with 1, 137 wounded and 379 killed (Fischer, p. 66). Gandhi responded to the massacre at Amourists by establishing a boycott on British goods, honors, courts, schools, and Jobs (Fischer, p. 67). This total boycott of the British government was a part of a policy of non- cooperation.

This response shifted Sandhog’s policy “ from love of to rejection of the British Empire- momentous in Sandhog’s and Indian’s life- grew out of the Clinically blood bath” (Fischer, p. 68). This policy closed Sandhog’s philosophy of Straight, or useful accommodation, and embraced a total rejection of the British Empire, denoting a distrust in them that runs against the trust that is central to Straight. Gandhi influenced thousands of prominent people with his policy of non-cooperation to deliver a significant, yet non-violent, blow to the British government.

To propagate this policy, he went on a seven month Journey through the countryside and touched hundreds of thousands of people with his presence and message (Fisher, 68). As a result, attorneys and lawyers gave up their practices to boycott British courts, students and teachers left their university classrooms, and peasants stopped paying taxes and consuming alcohol (Fischer, 68). Each of these actions tightened the noose around the British government and their significant sources of revenue (Fischer, 68). Perhaps no act of non-cooperation was as effective as the 1930 Salt March to Dandi.

On March 12, 1930, sixty-one year old Gandhi bravely and tirelessly promoted non-cooperation by marching to the sea coast to non-violently oppose a British salt monopoly. The British government had made it a “punishable crime to possess salt to purchased from the government salt monopoly’ (Fischer, 99). In response, Gandhi and his followers marched for twenty four days across two hundred and forty one miles to Dandi, where he would produce his own salt taken from the sea. On April 5, 1930, “ when Gandhi reached the sea at Dandi... His small band had grown into a non-violent army several thousand strong” (Fischer, 98).

During the march, the world had begun to take notice and when Gandhi deliberately protested the salt monopoly, he effectively communicated with India. In response, “ Along seacoast and in [Indian’s] numerous bays and inlets, peasants waded into the water with pans and produced salt illegally’ (Fischer, 99). This led to mass arrests, including the arrest of Gandhi himself almost one month later (Fischer, 99). With the world watching, the British government had proved itself to be “ the upholder of Western race

supremacy and the exploiter of those outside her own borders” (Fischer, 102).

Sandhog’s policy of non-cooperation as played out in the Salt March had two major implications. First, the British government was castes on the world’s stage as an oppressive government. Second, India had proved itself to be invincible (Fischer, 102). Gandhi was arrested by Lord Reading, tried in the British court by Justice Brookfield, and sentenced to six years in prison (Fischer, 73). While he did not serve the entire sentence, the time Gandhi spent in Jail proved disastrous for his followers. Without Sandhog’s constant reminder and example of non-cooperation, “ the political situation in India had deteriorated seriously’ (Fischer, 74).

About the situation, Gandhi stated, “ scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having given it up... Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up government schools and colleges have repented of their action and returned to them” (Fischer, 74). At this point, Gandhi knew that the relationship between Hindus and Muslims would determine the fate of India, and he set out to improve upon that relationship. In an attempt to improve the relationship between Hindus and Muslims and directly affect the future of India through indirect communication, Gandhi participated in fasting.

Well known for his fasts, Gandhi fasted for public benefit and always directed the fasts towards his own people, not the British government. In his own words, Gandhi states, “ I fasted to reform those who loved me” (Fischer, 76). By directing the fasts towards his own people, Gandhi played upon a “ chord of sympathy’ which existed between himself and his followers (Fischer, 76).

Often threatening to fast to his death in protest to violence and British rule, Gandhi reserved his right to drink water because “ he did not want to die. He loved life and wished to preserve his body’ (Fischer, 76).

The fasts, not intended to kill Gandhi, were intended to protest violence, demand independence, and foster a legislations between the Hindus and the Moslems. In fact, during the Moslem-Hindu fast, Gandhi chose to be monitored by two Moslem physicians and a Christian nurse in an attempt to prove his religious tolerance and faith in mankind (Fischer, 77). In effect, “ Hindus would see that their saint has confided his life to a Moslem... A dramatic demonstration of brotherhood” (Fischer, 77). Gandhi participated in several fasts during his lifetime, and some were more effective than others.

The Moslem- Hindu fast had very little impact on the hostility which seemed cemented between he two groups and the fate of India remained unchanged (Fischer, 77). While most Hindus heralded Gandhi as their saint, other Hindus saw him as a threat to and an enemy of traditional Hinduism. In fact, Gandhi died at the hand of a fellow Hindu, Nathuram Godse, who shot him three times point blank on January 30, 1948 at a prayer meeting (Fischer, 189). Though his life was ended too soon, Gandhi impacted the history of India and the story of its peoples with his policy of non-violence, his method of non-cooperation, and his strategy of fasting.

His massive following and effective demonstrations, combined with his fasts, promoted his policy of non- violence, truth and love and helped India gain her independence from Britain. Gandhi left this world and his beloved mankind with his message of love, truth, and courage which survives today

as his legacy. Works Cited Bullet, Richard, Pamela Crossly, Daniel Headrace, Steven Hirsch, Lyman Johnson, David Northrop. The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History. Volume II. Boston: Coinage Learning, 2012. Print Fischer, Louis. Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World. New York: Penguin Group, 1954. Print.