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**Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Freedom Movement: Building Inner Calm and Spiritual Power**

E. P. Menon

In the history of freedom movements around the world, the Indian freedom movement is considered most unique and still remembered. When two conflicting groups, nations, or civilizations confront each other, a of violence and bloodshed are bound to occur. When the final results are declared the costs are terrible for both groups. The two groups usually remain enemies for generations to come.

The case of the Indian and British conflict ended in 1947 with freedom for India. From the beginning the two groups lived like friends. In the end both groups could be described as victors. However, the relationship that exited until 1947 August 14, the relationship between oppressor and the oppressed became friends. There is no wonder that Gandhi said, “If patience is worth anything, it must endure to the end of time. A living faith will last in the midst of the blackest storm.”

Courage, infinite patience and a living faith were the three great qualities of Gandhi’s personality. He embodied these qualities from the very first time he was discriminated against on a railroad car in South Africa. On the train, he was thrown out of first class and off the train because he was not white. This incident sparked a flame in Gandhi. The flame traveled into several people, and enveloped the Indian atmosphere. Millions of sensitive minds where influenced by Gandhi’s approach and wisdom used against oppressive forces.

What was Gandhi’s approach and wisdom? One of the aspects of the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed was that the oppressed cooperate with the oppressor. Gandhi realized that this occurred in South Africa. After the two decades of work in South Africa, Gandhi concluded that once cooperation form the oppressed group was withdrawn, the oppressor could be disarmed and power taken away. But this process was not an easy task. It required an enormous amount of patience, educational activities, and dedication from the oppressed. It also required a great deal of personal examples and demonstrations. To some extent Gandhi achieved both of these. His approach was a new way of fighting for freedom.

After the actions, the practice of wisdom was necessary. By the time Gandhi started working in India, the country had already been “ruined economically, socially, politically, and spiritually”. Therefore organizing an armed attached against the British was financially and politically impossible. How could a starving man stand up and fight? Where could the necessary arms and ammo come from? How much time would it take to wage an armed struggle against the strongest nation on earth? All these questions were on the minds of the freedom fighters. So, it was Gandhi’s genius and the strength of India’s traditional life and culture.

For instance, fasting created exceptional inner power and calmness. Gandhi knew that fasting would create emotional power and spiritual unity. Therefore, he used this weapon to force the opposition to think calmly, deeply and with reason. Gandhi changed a starving society into a fasting society, and this created a new social energy to fight the enemy.

Gandhi’s third and most important contribution to the freedom movement was the spinning wheel. He introduced this technology to families across the country. The economic concept of the spinning wheel had two parts. First, it enabled people who were idle, jobless, poor, and illiterate to be productive. Second, people produce their own cloths so that did not have to purchased British goods. Those goods and clothing was produced in India, finished in Europe, and shipped back to India and sold for a high price.

Nonviolent noncooperation and useful productivity were powerful tools used against the British by the masses. The people did not have to try to produce resources to make arms or military training. Although, some people were impatient and restless with Gandhi’s approach. Some wanted a violent uprising. But Gandhi insisted the patience and nonviolence were necessary because the oppressor needed time to correct their actions. In the long run, the nonviolent methods helped maintain a friendship between the Indians and British after the British lost power.

Gandhi stand out uniquely from other leaders. He was an educator and an agitator all his life. His ultimate goal was total human freedom by using just and peaceful strategies. Gandhi wanted to liberate all oppressed human beings. He lived and struggled for freedom.