

## **LEADERS, REFORMERS & ADMINISTRATORS**

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### **MAHATAMA GANDHI**

Mahatama Gandhi lived as a messiah of peace and love. Carl Heath described him as “the type of the civilized and humanized man.”

#### **Ends and Means**

*An end is something we want to secure and the means represent the ways in which we endeavour to attain it. Gandhiji was an ethical absolutist. Closely connected with his insistence on non-violence is his emphasis on the requirement that our means must be moral.*

- He was of the view that immoral means cannot lead to truth and justice. As the means so the end. According to him, “The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree and there is just the same inviolable connection between means and the ends as there is between the seed and tree.”
- Moral means will inevitably lead to a moral end. Recourse to immoral means sets in a chain of reaction and ultimately distorts the vision. He was of the view that if one takes care of the means, the ends will take care of themselves.
- Gandhiji stressed if moral means integrate mankind, immoral ones disrupt and disintegrate. Violence, fraud, deceit, treachery, and Machiavellian diplomacy have always wrecked human unity.
- He held the view that humanity can be united only through the practice of non-violence in individual and social conduct. In fact by his insistence upon the moral quality of means, Gandhiji spiritualized politics.
- Politics to him was not the game of manipulation or acquisition of power. Gandhiji was not prepared to make any compromise on fundamental principles.
- Loyalty to moral values was the supreme consideration for him. He held the view that what cannot be justified by conscience, cannot be justified on political or patriotic grounds. He said, “Where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with his blessings.”
- His emphasis that means and ends are the two sides of the same coin and that the division between the two is artificial and wrong refutes the prevalent theory that the end justified the means. Gandhi was so particular about the moral soundness of the means that he would have refused the freedom of country if it was to be the outcome of fraud or violence.
- Gandhi revolutionized politics.
- He set himself resolutely against the principle which was rigidly followed by politicians in general and communist and fascists in particular. To the fascists, communists and modern politicians end justifies the means. To them means good or bad are immaterial, end should be achieved. Gandhi repudiated such a doctrine.

### **Moral approach to Economics**

The life of abnegation of Buddha, the philosophy of Gita and Tolstoy's moral approach to economics induced Gandhiji to stress non-accumulation, non-stealing and sharing of one's possessions with the needy and the distressed.

- In the words of Gandhiji, "Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful."
- The edifice of the entire Gandhian economics stands on ethical values. This emphasis on ethical aspect distinguishes Gandhian economic philosophy from that of Marshall and Marx. Whereas Marx lays emphasis on class struggle, Gandhiji emphasises class coordination. Marx solves the problem of economic inequality through a bloody revolution where as Gandhi achieves the same goal through the introduction of moral standards in economics and developing economics of social justice in place of economics of profit.
- Further, Gandhiji condemned the 'monster god of materialism'. He pleaded for simplicity, a wise regulation of riches and absolute social justice. He felt that the malady of modern civilization is psychological. Hence there is a craze for accumulation. Gandhi wanted the rich to recognize the immanence of God in all creatures and believe in voluntary dispossession for the diffusion of universal contentment. According to him, God was not friendly to those who secretly coveted the wealth of others. Absolute minimization of personal wants is the way to realize God.

### **Trusteeship**

Gandhiji believed in divinity of man. Hence it is difficult to distinguish between man and man. It is from his deep feeling of spirituality of man that Gandhiji derived his ethico-economic theory of trusteeship and inheritance.

- He said, "Everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore it was for his people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion, he became a trustee of that portion of God's people." Hence he emphasised a theory of thorough equality and believed in equal distribution of wealth.
- He strongly felt that if equality provided the key to non-violent social order, trusteeship supplied the key to the avoidance of violent tactics for the establishment of equality. The rich did not require all their wealth for the satisfaction of their personal needs.
- The rich should utilize the surplus wealth for the benefit of the society at large. They should act as trustees of the surplus wealth.

### **According to Gandhiji :**

- Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the capitalistic order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives the capitalist a chance of reforming themselves. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemptions.
- It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as permitted by society for its own welfare.
- It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
- An individual is not to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.

- Not only a decent minimum living wage is to be fixed up, but also a limit is to be fixed for the maximum income. The difference between the minimum and maximum incomes is to be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time.
- The character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

## Doctrine of Limits

As regards his attitude to property, Gandhi adopted a doctrine of limits which aimed at simplification of the standard of living and voluntary limits on private property.

- He advocated practice of self-renunciation. Property created worries and yielded anti-social results. He said that the so-called comforts of life are positive obstacles to the elevation of mankind.
- He held that increase of material comforts, does not in any way whatsoever, conduce to moral growth. Hence he limited our wants to necessities.
- For utilitarians and classical economists, money was the greatest of all the human desires and profit was the primary source of pleasure and the lack of it, a primary source of pain.
- Gandhi described profit motive as the chief characteristic of modern industrialism and abhorred it.

## DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

### Views on Religion

- Radhakrishnan defines religion as the insight into the nature of reality (darsana) or experience of Reality (anubhava). Religion is the self-manifestation of the ultimate reality in man. It is a strenuous endeavor to apprehend truth.
- The function of religion is to further the evaluation of man into his divine stature, develop increased awareness and intensity of understanding, and bring about a better, deeper and more enduring adjustment in life.
- He states that sravana, manana and nididhyasana (hearing, reflection and disciplined meditation respectively) are the three stages of religious life, and one has to rise from one stage to another.
- Humanity was Dr. Radhakrishnan's religion. He believed that Religion consists in doing justice, in loving, in mercy and in making our fellow creatures happy. For him, the end of religion was an essential knowledge of God.
- He was of the opinion that religion must establish itself as a rational way of living. Religion must express itself in reasonable thoughts, fruitful action and right social institution.

### Universal Religion

- He laid the foundation for a Universal Religion that satisfies the demands of reason and the needs of humanity.
- He searched the hearts of all religions and the writings of all the mystics of the East and the West and pleaded for a global outlook and an integrated approach to the problems of the world.
- His work in the field of comparative religion, and his earnest endeavour to restore the true conception of religion are truly the permanent testimony to his greatness.

### Views on Ethics

- The goal of the world process is a harmonious unity, and therefore moral life is the enrichment of life that is the outcome of the recognition of others and adaptation to them.
- To Radhakrishnan any form of life, where we have significance and social value, is moral.
- Morality is the current brand of social custom and one who deviates from it is immoral.
- Intuition finds a place in his ethics. For him ethical experiences are profoundly transformative. They resolves dilemmas and harmonize seemingly discordant paths of possible action.
- He concedes that the vast majority of moral decisions are the result of conformity to well-established moral codes. However, it is in times of moral crisis that the creative force of ethical intuitions come to the fore.
- He accounts for growth of moral consciousness in terms of the creative intuitive impulse.
- The intuition must be not only translated into positive and creative action but shared with others.
- Those whose lives are profoundly transformed and who are guided by the ethical experience are, for Radhakrishnan, moral heroes. The moral hero, as per Radhakrishnan does not live by intuition alone.
- The moral hero, guided as he or she is by the ethical experience, who carves out an adventurous path is akin to the discoverer who brings order into the scattered elements of a science or the artist who composes a piece of music or designs buildings. In a sense, there is very much an art and science to ethical living.
- The contribution of ethically realized individuals is their promotion of moral progress in the world. Though morality commands conformity, all moral progress is due to nonconformists.
- The moral hero is no longer guided by external moral codes, but by an inner rhythm of harmony between self and the universe revealed to him in the intuitive experience.
- He believed that ethical institutions at their deepest transcend conventional and mechanically constructed ethical systems.
- Society judges all acts according to well-known common standards. It assumes that everything is susceptible of scientific or impersonal treatment.

### Ethics of Caste

- He affirmed that the caste system, is an exemplary case of ethical tolerance and accommodation born out of an intuitive consciousness of reality.
- The institution of caste illustrates the spirit of comprehensive synthesis characteristic of the Hindu mind with its faith in the collaboration of races and the co-operation of cultures.
- Caste affirms the value of each individual to work out his or her own spiritual realization, a spiritual consciousness that can be understood in terms of integral experience.
- In Radhakrishnan's eyes, caste is the creative innovation of those "whose lives are characterized by an unshakable faith in the supremacy of the spirit, invincible optimism, ethical universalism, and religious toleration."

### Views on Society and the World

- He believed that economic man is not the whole man. For a complete human being we require cultivation of grace and joy of soul overflowing in love and devotion and free service of a regenerated humanity.

- Collective myths have poisoned the soul of men.
- Collection of dangerous weapons is all the way harmful for mankind and the world order.
- The desperate need of today's world is peace. Nothing is inevitable except peace.
- His idealism gives us a balanced and true picture of the relation between the individual and the society.
- The real individual needs the society to grow to his best stature. The Society and the individuals are not antithetical to each other. They are inseparable.

## Views on education

- Dr. Radhakrishnan defines education as the instrument for social, economic and cultural change. For social and national integration, for increasing productivity, education should be properly utilized.
- He states that the aim of education is to bring nearer to God. In this aim one should study the various aspects of education.
- Through education he wanted to establish a classless society in order to bring equality between man and man. He wants that education should develop universal brotherhood.
- The most important aim of education is to help us to see the other world, the invisible and intangible world beyond space and time.
- Education has to give us a second birth, to help us to realize what we have already in us. He wants that the student should come close to society and nature in order to understand the same.
- Education should enable one to imbibe attitude of simple living and high thinking. He attached great importance to spiritual education. Without a spiritual bent of mind, the physical and intellectual development of a person remains stunted. This situation is detrimental to the progress of mankind.
- He attached great importance to observation, experiments and the relationship of nature and society in the method of teaching. He is of the view that teaching of moral values should be through real and living examples.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Rabindranath Tagore was one of the most distinguished personalities of modern Asia. As a poet and writer, he was hailed as the Goethe of Bengali language and literature. In the western eyes, he was the outstanding national figure and a cultural ambassador of the spiritual East. He instilled patriotism in his countrymen through his poetry. Gandhiji portrayed him as the "great sentinel."

- He stood for humanism, universalism and the oneness of man. In the words of Count Keyserling he was "the most universal, the most encompassing, the most complete human being."
- He was neither a politician nor an academician. Still his contribution to the contemporary politics was fairly substantial and to political thought quite notable.

## His Concept of Freedom

His sensitive creative soul rebelled against concentration of power. He stood for autonomy of the human spirit. Freedom served as antidote to mechanical conventions, arbitrary and tyrannical laws, priestly prejudices and narrow social creeds. It alone served as a counterpoise to death, shame and trammels.

- The state exists to protect the interests of the individuals and not the individual to safeguard the state. Tagore in a way sanctified the moral and spiritual freedom of the human spirit.