

Unification Thought's Insights into Gandhi's Approach to Peace

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Journal of Unification Studies Vol. 13, 2012 - Pages 113-138

The word "Peace" has two levels of meaning in the Unification lexicon. In the Unification Thought view of history, one finds the Unification laws or principles of creation as well as the Unification laws or principles of restoration. When "peace" is understood in the context of the principles of creation, it relates to the notion of ultimate or original peace. Such peace can only emanate from the realization of the original purpose of creation: the completion of the perfected quadruple base in the original family. Peace along with freedom, unity and happiness is an outcome of the realization of love in the original family. It emanates and extends from the perfection of the messianic family, the first family that accomplishes the purpose of creation.

Unification Theory, particularly through the Divine Principle and in the speeches of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, clarify that, in accordance with God's original plan, Christianity had responsibility to prepare both the spiritual as well as the political, social and economic environment for the second coming of the Lord. Repeatedly Rev. Moon's teachings have pointed to the importance of the period immediately following World War II when the three major Christian powers of the United Kingdom, the United States and France had a special responsibility to prepare the worldwide environment for the Kingdom of God. On that foundation, Korea should have received Rev. Moon as the Lord of the Second Coming. Unfortunately, instead he and his teachings were dismissed and even derided.

When Rev. Moon was not recognized, the Christian foundation that had been prepared to assist him was no longer available to him. That foundation deteriorated further in the ensuing decades. The responsibility for much of the restoration work that Christianity was to have achieved was instead transferred to the Lord of the Second Coming. Thus the pre-messianic Christian task of making peace was passed on to Rev. Moon, just as it had been passed from John the Baptist to Jesus when John the Baptist continued his own ministry instead of becoming Jesus' disciple and offering his extensive foundation and ministry to support Jesus' work.

This level of peace-building, including addressing the problem of communism, would fall under the category of what we will refer to here as peace-building during the history of restoration, or restoration peace. Restoration peace, we learn from the teachings of Rev. Moon, has three essential dimensions for a central figure:

First, the man who is willing to save the world should be able to defeat Satan; then he must come into the love of God; and finally, feeling the heart of God and his fallen brother, he must be willing to sacrifice himself in place of his fallen brother, in order to relieve God's grief and his fallen brother's grief. Only on that condition can both be taken back to God.[1]

This process is elaborated on in New Essentials of Unification Thought in its discussion of Laws of Restoration, most specifically through the Law of Indemnity and the Law of Separation,[2] and through its explanation of Changes in History.[3]

Ideally, peaceful change and blessing result when existing central figures are able to recognize the new central figure and unite with him. Unfortunately that has not often been the case, as witnessed by the way in which both Jesus and Rev. Moon were not recognized by the existing central figures when they initiated their ministries. In that event, the central figures have to take on the burden of restoration by making sacrifices. Although not a messianic figure, nevertheless Mohandas K. Gandhi can be viewed as fitting with this paradigm.

In our discussion of Gandhi in this article, we do not focus upon original peace that was to have resulted from the fulfillment of the original ideal of the Principle of Creation. Based on the realization of the ideal, Unification Thought holds that, through people understanding and resembling the Divine Character and the Divine Image of God, the way can open to resolve all problems: "Only through a correct and full understanding of the Divine Image, as well as the Divine Character, will we be able to solve the problems of human life, society, history and the world." [4]

Instead, we will see that Gandhi operated within the principles of restoration peace. He was born in 1869, more than a half a century prior to the birth of Rev. Moon. His most important achievements occurred by 1941, when the British conceded that they would grant India Commonwealth Status and thus allow it to achieve its independence. Because most of Gandhi's work preceded World War II, we necessarily should see his efforts at peace and reconciliation in the context of restoration rather than ultimate or ideal peace.

As a practitioner of restoration peace, Gandhi's life course deserves serious study by scholars of Unification Thought. In particular, Gandhi's use of non-violent civil disobedience, marked by what was

known as non-cooperation, a process that he referred to as “Satyagraha” (standing firm for truth), represents one of the most remarkable achievements of human history. Without weapons, Gandhi brought together millions of Muslims and Hindus and also won the support of many Christians as he challenged the ongoing British occupation and control of the Asian subcontinent. His remarkable story and achievement were accomplished even as thousands of non-violent Muslims and Hindus managed to embrace even the gunfire and the shackles of their oppressors, and by doing so moved their British and Boer[5] oppressors’ hearts to the point where they finally surrendered to Gandhi’s integrity and justice. His political achievements, without resorting to conflict, number among the greatest in all of restoration history.

Gandhi and the Christian Cultural Sphere

Unification Thought outlines the strengths and limitations of the key value systems of Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Humanitarianism,[6] recognizing the contribution that they each make to absolute values. Although Gandhi was not a Christian, he did study Christianity while a law student in England and likewise later while living in South Africa.

Gandhi was inspired by the Sermon on the Mount. He was moved by Jesus’ other appeals for forgiveness and love. Several of these exhortations by Jesus are also paid tribute to in New Essentials of Unification Thought.[7] Gandhi was also influenced by the writings of Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer and Christian pacifist. He was moved by Henry David Thoreau’s essay On Civil Disobedience. Gandhi was, in a number of ways, a product of the Christian cultural sphere, particularly punctuated by his study not just of Christianity but of British Law. However, he was also strongly influenced by Asian tradition, including the Jain, Hindu and Buddhist appeal to Ahimsa or to doing no deliberate harm to any living being.

Gandhi did not embrace Christianity as a faith but remained a Hindu. However, he genuinely celebrated the good in all major religions, especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity. One can understand that one of the greatest obstacles to his acceptance of Christianity was the fact that both in South Africa and in India, the oppressors who imposed unjust racial, ethnic and religious sanctions were identifiably Christians:

Times change and systems decay. But it is my faith that, in the result, it is only non-violence and things that are based on non-violence that will endure. Nineteen hundred years ago Christianity was born. The ministry of Jesus lasted for only three brief years. His teaching was misunderstood even during his own time and today Christianity is a denial of his central teaching: “Love your enemy.” But what are nineteen hundred years for the spread of the central doctrine of a man’s teaching?[8]

Nevertheless, myriads of Christians in Britain, in South Africa and around the world came to be humbled by Gandhi’s faith and his attitude of sacrifice and commitment.

Gandhi and the Islamic Cultural Sphere

Gandhi lived in a country shaped by the traditions of Hinduism and then further influenced by the spread of Islam. Under the Mogul Empire (1398-1857), monarchs of the Islamic faith ruled India until shortly prior to the British colonization of the nation. The Mogul Empire was religiously tolerant and Mogul rule represented a period in which India achieved significant economic growth and cultural development.

Over many years Gandhi read both Islamic and Hindu religious texts on a daily basis. Gandhi felt that Islam had been misinterpreted and that it mistakenly embraced violence as an acceptable modality for change:

Six centuries rolled by and Islam appeared on the scene. Many Musalmans will not even allow me to say that Islam, as the word implies, is unadulterated peace. My reading of the Koran has con-vinced me that the basis of Islam is not violence. But, here again, thirteen hundred years are but a speck in the cycle of Time. I am convinced that both these great faiths will live only to the extent that their followers imbibe the central teaching of non-violence. But it is not a thing to be grasped through mere intellect; it must sink into our hearts.[9]

One of Gandhi’s strongest supporters was Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1892-1989). Khan, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize, believed that Gandhi’s strategy of nonviolent, proactive resistance or satyagraha[10] was the most effective vehicle for ending Britain’s military, political and economic occupation of South Asia and for realizing the Asian subcontinent’s independence. Along with fellow Khudai Khidmatgars,[11] a nonviolent army composed of devout Pashtun Muslims, Khan endured imprisonment and torture[12] under the British and later the Pakistani governments. Yet Khan remained committed throughout his life to loving his oppressors and to responding to them through Gandhian-like principles that stressed inner peace and patience as key dispositions when facing the oppressor. When

challenged as to whether or not his belief system and activism were consistent with the teachings of Islam, Khan responded that his convictions and practices had their roots in the prophet Muhammad's practice of sabr during Islam's formative years in Mecca.[13]

Gandhi's Background and Early Life Preparation

Mohandas Gandhi was born in 1869 in Western India. His parents were members of the Vaishya or merchant caste and they had a significant history of involvement in political leadership and public service. Gandhi's forbears had served as the British colonial government's chief representative in Porbandar, Gujarat in the three generations that preceded him.[14]

Gandhi grew up in a community where there was a significant presence of both Hindus and Jains. He developed a deep appreciation of both of these faiths and of the concept of Ahimsa or of not doing harm. He grew up in a family that was strictly vegetarian, and although Gandhi occasionally strayed from this, he strived to live based on those edicts. He had only average academic success in his early years in school. In his early life he also had great difficulty in speaking before the public.

Gandhi was afforded an opportunity to go to the United Kingdom to study law in 1888. Although only nineteen years old, Gandhi, in accord with Indian custom, had already married and had a son, however, he had to leave them in India when he headed for Britain. Gandhi's mother raised her son Mohandas as a strict Hindu. While in Britain, she asked that he not eat meat and not engage in any type of sexual activity. As per her request, he managed to live as a vegetarian and also remained faithful to his wife. Gandhi took advantage of numerous opportunities to establish friendships and to develop an appreciation of British culture.[15]

Gandhi also familiarized himself with the Christian faith during this time. He regularly attended church services, although he found something wanting. During that period, he also became exposed to theosophy. He felt more comfortable in mystical rather than in doctrinal circles.

Gandhi's Early Years in South Africa

In 1893 Gandhi was invited to represent an Indian client in South Africa and he traveled there. When he arrived, he soon experienced the stratification of the races. He was denied seating in the first class section of a rail car because of his color.[16] That humiliation would have a defining impact on his life trajectory in South Africa and beyond. It would serve as the impetus for him becoming a champion of Indian rights. Gandhi's first experience of discrimination awakened him to the gravity of racial and ethnic stereotyping discrimination in South Africa. His initial response to such challenges was to be reliant on the law and the court system. However, enforced separation based on race or what would come to be known later as "Apartheid" [apartness or apartheid in Afrikaans] was not the only challenge that South Africa's Indians faced. Many Indians had been brought to South Africa by whites. To reimburse their transport costs, they became indentured servants, working as tenant farmers or domestics and doomed to years of virtual bondage before they could ever reimburse their debts.

In South Africa, Indians had representation in the Natal region parliament. Yet already at the time of Gandhi's arrival, steps were being taken that would disenfranchise them. Gandhi distributed petitions both in Natal and to the British Government expressing opposition to the bill, hoping that the position would be reversed. However, this effort was unsuccessful and Indians did lose their parliamentary representation. Gandhi founded the Natal Indian Conference in 1894 to give Indians a voice. He soon emerged as the foremost leader of the movement to promote the civil rights of Indians in South Africa. His fellow Indians pleaded with him to remain in South Africa and, feeling their need for his presence, he did so.

During his twenty years in South Africa, Gandhi challenged various forms of discrimination. Best known are the challenges in the Transvaal where legislation was enacted that obliged those of Indian origin to register as such with the Transvaal government. Known to Indians as the Black Act, it sparked Gandhi to lead acts of non-violent civil obedience against the government beginning in 1907.[17]

The actions of the Transvaal Government led to strong resistance on the part of the Indian community and a refusal of most to comply with the law. When this legislation became the law of the land in July 1907, less than five hundred of the thirteen thousand Indians registered.[18] When one Indian who had failed to comply was singled out as an example and placed in jail, the Indian community rallied around that arrest. Gandhi was rounded up in a government raid. When Gandhi appeared before the court, he pled guilty to the charge of refusing to comply with the ordinance and requested the maximum sentence. All of Gandhi's supporters followed his example. Gandhi had become a "hero" for all of South Africa's Indian immigrants.[19]

Gandhi led the resistance movement and, early in his first term in prison, he was called out by General Jan Christian Smuts, a government official, to find a compromise solution. Smuts offered Gandhi that if

the local Indians registered voluntarily to prevent more immigrants from “flooding” the country, Smuts would repeal the offensive Black Act. Gandhi agreed, and he and the other political prisoners were released.

At a mass meeting in Johannesburg, Gandhi was asked what would happen if Smuts betrayed him. He replied,

A satyagrahi bids good-bye to fear. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the satyagrahi is ready to trust him for the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed.[20]

To set the example, Gandhi wanted to be the first to register voluntarily, but on his way to doing so, he was severely beaten by Indian Moslems who felt he had betrayed them. Gandhi asked that his assailants not be punished and that the blood he shed help bind the Moslems and Hindus closer together. It was a prayer he offered often and in vain.[21]

Smuts did betray his promise to Gandhi. In protest more than two thousand Indians burned their registration certificates on August 16, 1908. In the British press, the event was compared to the Boston Tea Party.[22]

Indians were also prohibited from traveling between the South African provinces of Transvaal and Natal simply because they were not white. Gandhi and his followers, especially women including Gandhi’s wife, challenged the prohibition and crossed the borders and were arrested and imprisoned. Gandhi also challenged legislation South Africa imposed that attempted to deny the legitimacy of Hindu and Muslim marriages and thus undermine Indian integrity and family.

Gandhi was deceived on numerous occasions by General Smuts, and yet Gandhi persevered, refusing to view Smuts as a hopeless enemy. He endured prison, and he and his followers subjected themselves to fasting and other forms of self-denial. By 1914 Gandhi had prevailed. The forced registration ended, Muslim and Hindu marriages were recognized, and, most important of all, he had won the heart of his main adversary:

Just before Gandhi left South Africa he gave Jan Christian Smuts a pair of sandals he had made during one of his stays in prison. Years later Smuts said, “I have worn these sandals for many a summer ... even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man.”[23]

Gandhi in India

In 1914 Gandhi quit South Africa, telling his Indian compatriots that he had done all that he could do to improve their living circumstances. He returned to India where he began his project of seeking home rule for India. In 1919 new legislation, the Rowlatt Act, served as the basis for the British to root out revolutionary, pro-independence elements within India. Gandhi reacted by asking Indians to join in a nonviolent, national level general strike in protest against this act that was designed to perpetuate British rule.

The protest was massive when it took place on March 30, 1919. British India was crippled on that day, but unfortunately violence broke out in many parts of India. Saddened by the violence, Gandhi fasted 14 days. He then spent much of the next year educating his own people on the value of Satyagraha and its requirement of non-violent civil disobedience. He emphasized that the key to ending British rule was nonviolence. Otherwise, by embracing violence, the Indians would be no different than any force of oppression.

Gandhi called for nonviolent non-cooperation with the extant British political economy of India. He first focused on ending the British monopoly on the textile industry, which exported Indian cotton and other materials to Britain and returned them to India as finished or semi-finished cloth. Gandhi set the example by acquiring a spinning wheel and began producing his own traditional Indian cloth known as kheda rather than purchase British textiles. He inspired his fellow Indians to do the same. He even continued spinning at times while delivering his speeches.

In 1929 Gandhi gave the British a deadline by which India should be granted Commonwealth Status. When that did not occur he again challenged British grip on India’s economy through his famed Salt March. He defied the British monopoly on salt by marching 200 miles to the seaside village of Dandi. There he proceeded to harvest his own salt, an action which was prohibited by British law.

While preparing the protest that followed at the British Dharasana Saltworks factory, the main site where salt was produced, Gandhi was arrested and thrown into prison. His followers nevertheless went forward with the demonstration, and as 2500 were brutally beaten by British soldiers they offered no resistance.

The news of the event and the photographic record of the beatings sparked an enormous reaction in Britain. Lord Irwin, the British viceroy, was forced to negotiate with Gandhi and allow Indians to produce their own salt.

By 1941 the British government announced its intention to grant India its independence. Challenges remained, and Gandhi would witness the tragic division of the country into two separate states, something that he had wanted to avoid at all costs.

Understanding Gandhi and his Practice of Satyagraha

More important than Gandhi's external tactics that forged political change may have been his attitude toward his fellow Indians, as well as toward the British. When violence broke out during the March 1919 strike and British citizens were attacked by Indians, Gandhi began to fast and emphasized that his work could only go forward with purification, because Indians had compromised themselves in embracing violence.

When Gandhi's fellow Indians refused to allow India's Dalits or Untouchables in Hindu temples, he again fasted until they relented. When he witnessed the great wealth that some Indians had accumulated, he chastised them and asked his wife to surrender her jewelry first, as an example for the cause. He warned that independence could not come without Indians being willing to forego their wealth, to sell their gold and diamonds and commit such wealth to the cause of independence.

Gandhi endured prison on many occasions both in India and in South Africa. He followed certain clear guiding principles on the road to India's political independence and in the struggle for human rights in South Africa. Most importantly he emphasized the need to trust, to forgive and to love. In the case of South Africa, we noted that he embraced and won the heart of General Jan Smuts.

Gandhi faced prison time and again both in South Africa and in India. He learned to embrace his judges, prosecutors and jailers. By doing so, he not only strengthened his own cause; he increased the likelihood that the hearts of his adversaries would melt and they would come to recognize the truth and the wrongdoing of their handling of the Indian people.

Gandhi's personal sacrifices contributed to ending the hostility of Whites towards Indians both in South Africa and in India. He came to be recognized as someone whom the British could trust and count on, even if they opposed his specific political objectives and interests. As he grew older in India, the British became concerned for Gandhi's health, for example, when he fasted twenty-one days at the age of 64.[24] When he was again imprisoned in his 70s, the British did everything that they could to keep Gandhi healthy. They preferred a healthy Gandhi to the outbreaks of violence that resulted when his practice of Satyagraha did not prevail. Ultimately Gandhi emerged as a victor and a hero in the eyes of the British, both in South Africa and in India. He attracted numerous European followers, and even Winston Churchill, who had been critical of Gandhi, had no choice but to accept his central role in determining the future of India.

Unfortunately Gandhi witnessed the demise of his dream of a united India in which all religions and cultures of the subcontinent would co-exist peacefully and harmoniously. Hindus could not fully embrace Satyagraha and the strict formula of peace and love. At times they mercilessly lashed out at British occupiers and at their Muslim compatriots. Although some Muslims, notably Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his army the Khudai Khidmatgars, embraced Gandhi's principles of nonviolence, many others did not do so. The Pakistan independence leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah believed that the Muslims were at risk in an India so dominated by Hindus. Jinnah maintained that, because of those risks, the Muslims needed their own state.

Gandhi was devastated by the prospects of the division into two states. Yet he also felt hopeless to prevent it. He saw that the principle of Satyagraha was unlikely to last beyond his own lifespan. His wife Kasturba died in 1944 after having spent more than a year with Gandhi in prison. In 1948, he himself died at the hands of a Hindu militant who felt that Gandhi had betrayed the Hindu dream by encouraging the leadership of the new India to make very substantial financial concessions to the emerging state of Pakistan, once it became clear that the dream of a single, intact India was not to be realized.

Gandhi nevertheless left an amazing legacy of non-violent civil disobedience and reconciliation that was to be inherited by Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and other champions. In his lifetime Gandhi had enormous impact on three continents—Africa, Asia and Western Europe. In the decade following his assassination, his principles of Satyagraha would become the defining strategy in the development of the Christian-based Civil Rights movement in the United States under Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Essence of Satyagraha

Satyagraha is derived from the Hindi terms satya meaning “truth” and graha meaning “force” or “strength.” The term was coined and popularized by Gandhi and his followers. Satyagraha represents a commitment on the part of the practitioner to live in a truthful way. It also reflects the conviction that by adhering to such nonviolent principles, the oppressor or adversary would eventually come to recognize his or her own wrong doings and could thus repent and reconcile.

Gandhi himself provided the guidelines, emphasizing that civil disobedience or non-cooperation was never the first option. The first option was to attempt a peaceful negotiated settlement of differences when injustice existed. Gandhi emphasized the value of compromise:

A Satyagrahi never misses, can never miss, a chance of compromise on honorable terms, it being always assumed that, in the event of failure, he is ever ready to offer battle. He needs no previous preparation, his cards are always on the table.[25]

He also emphasized compliance to the law, stressing that it was this compliance with the law that gave the Satyagrahi[26] moral authority:

A Satyagrahi obeys the laws of society intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position of judge as to which particular laws are good and just and which unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined circumstances.[27]

On this topic Gandhi also explained:

A Satyagrahi is nothing if not instinctively law-abiding, and it is his law-abiding nature, which exacts from him implicit obedience to the highest law, that is the voice of conscience which overrides all other laws.[28]

This insight into the Satyagraha code of conduct is reminiscent of the mandate that Jesus gave to his followers regarding the rendering to Caesar of the things that belong to Caesar and the reference to the calling of his followers to walk two miles with the Roman soldier that asks that he walk one. Like Socrates, Jesus accepted the decision of Pilate, the representative of Caesar, and embraced the tragic fate that awaited him because of false accusations by his opponents. Likewise, Rev. Moon accepted imprisonment in the United States based on a verdict that most major American religious organizations found to be unjust, even though he was given the option to leave the country and avoid prison.

Nevertheless, Gandhi maintained that followers of Satyagraha should not cower and allow themselves to be humiliated and treated inhumanely. He warned that they should not yield their souls to the oppressor. They had an obligation to maintain their dignity as human beings:

Not to yield your soul to the conqueror means that you will refuse to do that which your conscience forbids you to do. Suppose the ‘enemy’ were to ask you to rub your nose on the ground or to pull your ears or to go through such humiliating performances, you would not submit to any of these humiliations. But if he robs you of your possessions, you will yield them because, as a votary of ahimsa, you have from the beginning decided that earthly possessions have nothing to do with your soul. That which you look upon as your own you may keep only so long as the world allows you to own it.[29]

On the other hand, Gandhi stressed the need for the Satyagrahi to respect the humanity of his oppressor in any negotiation and in the aftermath:

It is often forgotten that it is never the intention of a Satyagrahi to embarrass the wrong-doer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be to his heart. The Satyagrahi’s object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer. He should avoid artificiality in all his doings. He acts naturally and from inward conviction.[30]

For Gandhi, if it was not possible to achieve the objectives through negotiations and compromise, the next option would be nonviolent civil disobedience, which, beginning in India in 1920, included noncooperation with those responsible for acts of repression. Gandhi outlined the following behavioral guidelines:

Since Satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a Satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to Satyagraha. But when he has found the impelling call

of the inner voice within him and launches out upon Satyagraha, he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.[31]

In this respect, Gandhi's Satyagraha, once implemented after negotiations have failed, is a nonviolent alternative to war. It is equally resolute, and the participants understand that by taking these steps they put their own lives at risk.

Gandhi emphasized that under no conditions would or could violence be an option for a Satyagrahi:

The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence, whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public. It would be no answer in the case of an outbreak of violence that it was instigated by the State or other agencies hostile to civil resisters.[32]

He outlined certain clear dimensions of character that each Satyagrahi needed to possess and foster. These included faith in God, a commitment to non-violence, a belief in the essential goodness of all human beings. The Satyagrahi should be committed to sexual purity, abstaining from alcohol, and be willing to give up his possessions and even his life for the sake of the cause. When confronted with imprisonment, he should conform to the rules unless they compromise personal integrity and self respect.[33]

Non-Violence versus Pacifism

At this point in our discussion it would seem appropriate to distinguish between non-violence and pacifism. Pacifism can be an end in and of itself. That would mean that the avoidance of violence could constitute the highest value. However, for Gandhi and for those who followed him, the underlying value was not pacifism. The purpose of Satyagraha was not the absence of war; it was to end injustice and correct it. In his opposition to British rule, he indicated his intent to do so through non-violent means. Yet in his approach, Gandhi emphasized selective civil disobedience to unjust laws and to those laws alone.

Gandhi insisted upon honesty and transparency in the handling of money, insisting that all financial accounts must be kept in order. Those involved as his followers were expected to stand as model citizens. This helps to explain Gandhi's support of military inscription. Gandhi supported the British inscription of Indians at the time of the Boer War in South Africa and during the first and second world wars. He himself served as a medic and as a non-commissioned British officer during the Boer War. He supported the conscription of Indians into the military during World War I. One of his main reservations to Indian involvement during World War II stemmed from the British including India in their declaration of war against Germany without consulting him and other Indian representatives.

The Essential Role of Brahmacharya and Sexual Abstinence in Gandhi's Worldview

Gandhi's most profound actions went beyond acts of civil disobedience. He explored his own nature and felt compelled to control his own self, particularly his sexual desires. In his autobiography, he candidly shares about the struggles that he faced with lust. In speaking of his marriage to his childhood bride Katurbai, he confesses that many times his sexual encounters with her were motivated purely by lust. He especially lamented the fact that he was so preoccupied with sexual desire that he failed to be sensitive to the hour of his father's death. He repented that when his father was in his final moments of life Gandhi had abandoned his bedside in order to engage in sexual relations with his wife:

It was 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. I was giving the massage. My uncle offered to relieve me. I was glad and went straight to the bedroom. My wife, poor thing, was fast asleep. But how could she sleep when I was there? I woke her up. In five or six minutes, however, the servant knocked at the door. I started with alarm. "Get up," he said, "Father is very ill." I knew of course that he was very ill, and so I guessed what 'very ill' meant at that moment. I sprang out of bed.

"What is the matter? Do tell me!"

"Father is no more."

So all was over! I had but to wring my hands. I felt deeply ashamed and miserable. I ran to my father's room. I saw that if animal passion had not blinded me, I should have been spared the torture of separation from my father during his last moments. I should have been massaging him, and he would have died in my arms...

The shame... is a blot I have never been able to efface or forget, and I have always thought that although my devotion to my parents knew no bounds and I would have given up anything for it, yet it was weighed and found unpardonably wanting because my mind was at the same moment in the grip of lust. I have therefore always regarded myself as a lustful, though a faithful,

husband. It took me long to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it.[34]

The child conceived in this time period did not survive and Gandhi saw a relationship between his imprudence and the passing of the child:

The poor mite that was born to my wife scarcely breathed for more than three or four days. Nothing else could be expected. Let all those who are married be warned by my example.[35]

For Gandhi, it is clear that a linkage existed between the motivation for the male-female relationship and the children born from it.

In his Autobiography, Gandhi also confesses that he had faced three trials in his life when he was tempted into engaging in an extramarital relationship, at least one of which was with a prostitute in South Africa. Gandhi admitted his weaknesses and his proclivities and expressed gratitude that he had somehow managed to overcome these trials.[36]

While in South Africa, Gandhi felt that it was time to separate from his wife and to live a celibate life, to a significant extent because of his problem with lust. After two unsuccessful attempts, Gandhi succeeded in doing so in 1906:

What then, I asked myself, should be my relation with my wife? Did my faithfulness consist in making my wife the instrument of my lust? So long as I was the slave of lust, my faithfulness was worth noting. To be fair to my wife, I must say that she was never the temptress. It was therefore the easiest thing for me to take the vow of Brahmacharya, if only I willed it. It was my weak will or lustful attachment that was the obstacle.

Even after my conscience had been roused in the matter, I failed twice. I failed because the motive that actuated the effort was none the highest. My main object was to escape having more children.[37]

Beginning from 1906 Gandhi and Kasturba never again engaged in sexual relations. They lived separately for some thirty-eight years until Kasturba's passing in 1944 while she and her husband were in prison in Pune, India.

Gandhi explained, "Brahmacharya means control of the senses in thought, word, and deed." [38] He maintained that his decision to embrace Brahmacharya was a necessary step in the progression toward Satyagraha.[39] The inspiration for Satyagraha came shortly after their 1906 separation and Gandhi maintained that it was wholly unanticipated.[40] Gandhi encouraged his followers, Hindu and non-Hindu, Western and Indian alike, to embrace Brahmacharya as well. He posited that through taking this decision he had discovered the essence of freedom:

The importance of vows grew upon me more clearly than ever before. I realized that a vow, far from closing the door to real freedom, opened it. Up to this time I had not met with success because the will had been lacking, because I had had no faith in myself, no faith in the grace of God, and therefore my mind had been tossed on the boisterous sea of doubt. I realized that in refusing to take a vow man was drawn into temptation, and that to be bound by a vow was like a passage from libertinism to a real monogamous marriage... As I look back upon the twenty years of the vow, I am filled with pleasure and wonderment. The more or less successful practice of self-control had been going on since 1901. But the free-dom and joy that came to me after taking the vow had never been experienced before 1906. Before the vow I had been open to being overcome by temptation at any moment. Now the vow was a sure shield against temptation. The great potentiality of Brahmacharya daily became more and more patent to me.[41]

He felt that a key for a future non-violent India was that young Indians would learn to embrace the celibate life of Brahmacharya, with sex only serving for reproduction.[42]

Diet and Brahmacharya

Gandhi associated food and diet with simplicity: "the Brahmachari's [43] food should be limited, simple, spiceless, and, if possible, uncooked." Gandhi not only associated sexual desire with the natural sexual desire; he saw libido as fueled by what one ate, particularly meat but also by all any animal products including dairy products:

Six years of experiment have showed me that the Brahmachari's ideal food is fresh fruit and nuts. The immunity from passion that I enjoyed when I lived on this food was unknown to me after I changed that diet. Brahmacharya needed no effort on my part in South Africa when I lived on fruits and nuts alone. It has been a matter of very great effort ever since I began to take milk. How

I had to go back to milk from a fruit diet will be considered in its proper place. It is enough to observe here that I have not the least doubt that milk diet makes the Brahmacharya vow difficult to observe. Let no one deduce from this that all Brahmacharis must give up milk. The effect on Brahmacharya of different kinds of food can be determined only after numerous experiments. I have yet to find a fruit-substitute for milk which is an equally good muscle-builder and easily digestible. The doctors, vaidyas, and hakims have alike failed to enlighten me. Therefore, though I know milk to be partly a stimulant, I cannot, for the time being, advise anyone to give it up.

As an external aid to Brahmacharya, fasting is as necessary as selection and restriction in diet. So overpowering are the senses that they can be kept under control only when they are completely hedged in on all sides, from above, and from beneath. It is common knowledge that they are powerless without food, and so fasting undertaken with a view to control of the senses is, I have no doubt, very helpful.[44]

Unification Thought's Critique of Gandhi's Thought and Praxis

Gandhi's achievements are numerous. His practice of Satyagraha should be studied by Unificationists as an example of victory through love. When Unificationists think of the concrete meaning of Cheon Il Guk, it may be very important to study Gandhi's life and practice in depth in order to consider our response to any future challenges and the role that Satyagraha might play. During the Cold War when Rev. Moon spoke of the need to "march to Moscow,"[45] he was not calling for a militant attack upon the Soviet Union. Instead he was calling for a nonviolent outreach based on truth and service.[46]

Gandhi's use of Satyagraha allowed him to transform the attitudes of his most vocal critics. Gandhi had a strong understanding of the role that indemnity could play in addressing differences. On numerous occasions when his followers failed to maintain a nonviolent behavior and when they failed to live in accord with the norms of peace in their own community and when the British Crown government refused to compromise with Gandhi's calls for changes in social policy or they blocked public demonstrations, Gandhi responded by fasting for as long as twenty-one days and he fasted on numerous occasions.

Gandhi should also be credited for his ability to see the good that existed in all religious worldviews. He is said to have studied the texts of the Bhagavad-Gita and Qur'an on a daily basis. He was also inspired by the teachings of Christianity, and he understood that innate goodness and innate evil existed within all of the world's faiths.

His study of self and his appreciation of how even diet impacted on his desires and purity of heart are reminiscent of Rev. Moon's own trajectory aimed at mastery of self and his words: "Before you desire to control the universe, you must first be able to completely control yourself." [47]

Gandhi felt that the foundation for all of his Satyagraha activities was in the practice of Brahmacharya, which included both celibacy and denial of the body. Unification Thought recognizes the value of those processes in the context of certain moments of time, that is, in the age of indemnity. Gandhi lived his life in the age of indemnity when no other viable option or practice existed.

Truth or Love?

Unification Thought emphasizes the centrality of love in all relations and most importantly the love between husband and wife. Unification Thought also emphasizes that the very essence of God's nature is heart. Unification Thought defines heart as "the emotional impulse to obtain joy through love." [48] However, for Gandhi, God's most fundamental nature and identity was truth. His life was an "experiment with truth," rather than an experiment with love. In accord with the Western political model, the fundamental dynamic is expressed in the term "the individual and society." While a noble relationship, this relationship is normally based upon laws and norms rather than love. Even when speaking of devotion to one's country, service is referred to as a patriotic duty. While the West and the East both value and esteem honesty and loyalty, it is evident that honesty is the more emphasized value in the West whereas loyalty is the more emphasized value in the East. If we contrast these two values, loyalty is more based upon emotion and honesty is more based upon intellect although loyalty has a latent dimension of truth and honesty has a latent dimension of emotion.

Unification Thought would explain the limitation in the individual vis-à-vis society dynamic that Gandhi supported by noting that the fundamental bridge to society is the family. Yet, due to the fall, humanity was not able to bridge the gulf between the individual and society. That can only be realized through the completion of an ideal family, which can only be achieved through the appearance of True Parents.

Gandhi and Kasturba, his bride of 47 years, had an impressive relationship. They literally endured hell together, including prison, hunger and sickness in order to realize the dream of a free India. Although Gandhi was embraced by his followers and was even referred to by them as "Bapu" or father, his own

frame of reference in life could be the master-servant or the Cain-Abel relationship model rather than the parent-child relationship that Unification Thought identifies as the most fundamental relationship of all. In An Autobiography Gandhi elaborates on how he came to view the devoted husband-wife relationship as of less importance than human relations based on selfless service:

I had been wedded to a monogamous ideal ever since my marriage, faithfulness to my wife being part of the love of truth. But it was in South Africa that I came to realize the importance of observing brahmacharya even with respect to my wife. I cannot definitely say what circumstance or what book it was that set my thoughts in that direction, but I have a recollection that the predominant factor was the influence of Raychandbhai[49]... On one occasion I spoke to him in high praise of Mrs. Gladstone's devotion to her husband. I had read somewhere that Mrs. Gladstone insisted on preparing tea for Mr. Gladstone even in the House of Commons, and that this had become a rule in the life of this illustrious couple, whose actions were governed by regularity. I spoke of this to the poet, and incidentally eulogized conjugal love. "Which of the two do you prize more," asked Raychandbhai, "the love of Mrs. Gladstone for her husband as his wife, or her devoted service irrespective of her relation to Mr. Gladstone? Supposing she had been his sister, or his devoted servant, and ministered to him the same attention, what would you have said? Do we not have instances of such devoted sisters or servants? Supposing you had found the same loving devotion in a male servant, would you have been pleased in the same way as in Mrs. Gladstone's case? Just examine the viewpoint suggested by me."

Raychandbhai was himself married. I have an impression that at the moment his words sounded harsh, but they gripped me irresistibly. The devotion of a servant was, I felt, a thousand times more praiseworthy than that of a wife to her husband. There was nothing surprising in the wife's devotion to her husband, as there was an indissoluble bond between them. The devotion was perfectly natural. But it required a special effort to cultivate equal devotion between master and servant. The poet's point of view began gradually to grow upon me.[50]

As mentioned above, Gandhi came to the conclusion that he should separate from his wife and, after several unsuccessful attempts, did so wholly in 1906. Gandhi and his wife lived in celibacy from 1906 until her passing in 1944.

Critique of Raychandbhai's and Gandhi's View of Love

Gandhi's view that the "devotion of a servant was... a thousand times more praiseworthy than that of a wife for her husband" in some ways is correct; however, in the most fundamental of ways Gandhi was mistaken because the underlying assumption is that the culmination of love in Gandhi's and Raychandbhai's model is the individual rather than the family. An individual's love for a servant or child can do much for that servant, child or a community but a couple's love and devotion can do far more. It is not just the dual love of a man and a woman. It is also the combined love of the man, the woman and God. More powerful than the love of the couple is a family, one through which all of humanity can feel that they are part of a common family.

Unification Thought emphasizes a growth process through which children, first of all, experience the parental love of God as expressed through a mother and a father. They would next experience the sibling love of their brothers and sisters. Through the love that they felt with brothers and sisters, they would eventually also be prepared to experience conjugal love through a loving spouse and then convey God's heart of love to their own children and the quadruple base of the family would thus multiply and continue to be passed on to future generations. Furthermore, the healthy loving relations developed within the family would serve as the frame of reference for all relations in society. Elders would represent, depending on their age, grandparents, parents, uncles or aunts. Peers or those slightly older or younger would be related to as elder or younger brothers and sisters. One would relate to juniors as one related to one's own children.

In Gandhi's own life, instead of being able to foster a sense of family, Gandhi's focus was the Indian race and the ideal of the Indian nation. It may be for this reason that he was apparently unable to foster a sufficient sense of love and trust to convince his followers that, more than being Muslim or Hindu, they were first and foremost Indians—as was his dream.

Mohandas Gandhi, Unification Thought and the Role of Women

In South Africa, Indian women played a crucial role in addressing the South African prohibition of Indians moving from one province to another. Gandhi's own wife endured arrest and imprisonment in South Africa in order to expose and address this problem. Gandhi also did not hesitate to have his wife surrender her jewelry for the cause of Indian liberation before he asked any other women to do so. She also endured imprisonment with her husband in India. She even died in 1944 while a prisoner, supporting her husband's cause and India's cause. Nevertheless, while Gandhi spoke of the equality of men and women, he saw the women's essential place as the home. In Gandhi's Dilemma Manfred Steger notes that

Hinduism attributes two traditional roles to woman: “temptress” and “self-sacrificing wife and mother.”[51] Gandhi himself wished to see women de-sexualized and relate above all as mother, sister and daughter rather than as spouse.[52]

In studying Gandhi’s life, one is left with the impression that Gandhi knew very little about the heart and nature of women. Gandhi came to sexual relations as evil and as a “movement towards death.”[53] When he decided to embrace the celibate life of Brahmacharya in 1906, he says in *An Autobiography* that his wife did not object. However, it is unclear that this was a decision made jointly by the two of them. Gandhi’s writings and words do not seem to reflect an understanding of how the desire for sexual fulfillment does not just reside in men. Gandhi subjected himself to certain types of sexual temptation by women and largely overcame them, but he apparently did not reflect much on the impact that such experiments had on the women whom he involved.

Gandhi’s apparent inability to understand that sexual desire resided in women as well as in men made his views unbalanced. His lack of understanding of the opposite sex must have represented a serious obstacle in expanding the natural role that women could play in advancing peace and correcting injustice. His lack of understanding of the centrality of family also surely impacted upon his ability to understand the role of family in binding the individual to the community and the nation.

The limitations in Gandhi’s view cannot be attributed to Gandhi alone but to the tradition that surrounded him and informed his life. Raised as a Hindu, Gandhi was born and raised in Gujarat, a part of India where the Jain presence was profoundly felt. Even more than Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism stressed the centrality of celibacy as one grew spiritually. Likewise, we have noted that one of the Hindu characterizations of women is as a temptress.

We have noted that Gandhi clearly understood that nonviolence was not an end in itself but the proper and ethical means to achieve clear political objectives when diplomacy alone did not succeed. Unification Thought helps us to understand that the purpose of celibacy during the growing period of humankind, beginning with Adam and Eve, was not an end in itself. It served to develop a vertical relationship with God before entering into the horizontal relationship of husband and wife and the vertical relationship of parent and child. To summarize, Gandhi understood that nonviolence was not an end in and of itself; however, he failed to realize that, likewise, celibacy was not meant to be an end in and of itself.

The Eternal God was alone and unfulfilled prior to beginning to create. Even God needed to find a love partner to have fulfillment. God could not find fulfillment in a Master-Servant relationship but sought a parent-child relationship. Gandhi had the same needs. His sacrificial celibacy was the furthest that one could come to resembling the Creator at that time; however, with the appearance of True Parents, everything can advance to where humankind reflects the Original Image, fulfills the purpose of creation and realizes eternal peace.

A Unification Thought Reflection on the Legacy of Mohandas Gandhi

Mohandas Gandhi must rate among the greatest leaders in modern history. Indeed the methods that he pioneered also had a great impact on Dr. Martin Luther King’s efforts of non-violent resistance to challenge segregation and racial injustice in the United States. This also had an effect upon Nelson Mandela’s efforts to end Apartheid in South Africa as well as the efforts of many other advocates of non-violent resistance to oppression.

Gandhi’s “experiments with truth” assume new levels of meaning and application through the optic of Unification Thought. Unlike Brahmacharya, Unification Thought places the God-centered family as the central dynamic for lasting peace. For Unification Thought, God is more than “truth.” God, above all, is love, in all of its expressions: parental, spousal, conjugal, as well as the love of siblings and children. The paradigm for peace stems from and is fostered in the family rather than at the individual level, as Gandhi’s model suggests.

Gandhi’s efforts led to India’s independence. While opposing British rule, he managed to love his oppressors and to win the British people’s love, support, and admiration. Nevertheless, the culmination of Gandhi’s efforts was not completely fortuitous. Throughout his life Gandhi had built coalitions between Hindus and Muslims, but ultimately sectarian differences and violence led to the division of the Asian subcontinent into two nations, one based on Islam and a second democratic and pluralistic but sharply influenced and informed by Hinduism.

If, through his “experiments with truth,” Mohandas Gandhi could have discovered God as a being of love rather than only as a being of truth, he perhaps could have seen the culmination of his dream of peace and justice. Rev. Moon has repeatedly described peace, along with freedom, unity, and happiness as natural outcomes of the attainment of true or genuine love. This is even clearly articulated in article 4 of the Cheon Il Guk Pledge:

Our family, the owner of Cheon Il Guk, pledges to build the universal family encompassing heaven and earth, which is God's ideal of creation, and perfect the world of freedom, peace, unity and happiness, by centering on true love.[54]

This insight was not available to Gandhi, who unfortunately could not encounter Unification Thought in his lifetime. Nevertheless, he invested everything in what was available to him. To Christians, Hindus and Muslims alike he taught the power of patience, sacrifice and belief in the fundamental goodness of humankind. His life and work are a towering statement of self-denial and self-sacrifice that provides profound insights into the attitude and behavior needed to realize the ideal of Cheon Il Guk. Indeed, in his humble life, Gandhi “moved mountains.”

Notes

[1] Sun Myung Moon, “The Formula for God’s Providence,” in Twelve Talks. www.tparents.org/Moon-Books/sm12talk/12TALK05.htm, retrieved October 4, 2011.

[2] New Essentials of Unification Thought (Tokyo: Unification Thought Institute, 2005), pp. 376-379.

[3] Ibid, pp. 387-390.

[4] Ibid. p. 21.

[5] Boers were the Afrikaans-speaking South Africans primarily of Dutch descent. Literally translated, Boer means “peasant” or “farmer” in Afrikaans; however, it was also used to refer to the Afrikaans as a people.

[6] New Essentials, pp. 239-246.

[7] Ibid. p. 239.

[8] Mohandas Gandhi, The Collected Works of Mohandas Gandhi, Vol. 74, Sept. 9, 1938–Jan. 29, 1939, p. 131. www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL074.pdf. Retrieved on June 3, 2012.

[9] Ibid., p. 132.

[10] Satyagraha was a term coined by Gandhi and his supporters for the form of nonviolent resistance to Britain’s continued occupation and control of India. The term literally means “insistence on the truth.”

[11] Khudai Khidmatgars literally meant “Servants of God” in the Pashtun language.

[12] Many of Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s nonviolent followers were shot and killed by British troops.

[13] Eknath Easwaran, Nonviolent Soldier of Islam (Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1999), p. 243, describes sabr as the Islamic equivalent of satyagraha or a nonviolent insistence on the truth.

[14] “Mohandas Gandhi,” New World Encyclopedia. www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Gandhi. Retrieved November 5, 2011.

[15] John Holmes and Bruce Hayneworth, Mahatma Gandhi: An American Portrait, Michigan State University, African Activist Project. www.Harvardsquarelibrary.org/Gandhi/Community-Church-of-New-York.php. Retrieved November 5, 2011.

[16] Ibid.

[17] “Mohandas Gandhi,” New World Encyclopedia.

[18] “The Life of M.K. Gandhi, Part 6,” by Rosa Strauss Feuerlicht, The Progress Report. www.progress.org/gandhi/gandhi06.htm. Retrieved November 4, 2011.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] “The Life of M.K. Gandhi, Part 7,” by Rosa Strauss Feuerlicht, The Progress Report. www.progress.org/gandhi/gandhi07.htm. Retrieved November 4, 2011.

[24] Gandhi fasted twenty-one days in 1924 and in 1934. In 1933 he began what he described as a fast to the death to end discrimination against the dalits or untouchables who until then were denied entry into the Hindu temples. educ.jmu.edu/~omearawm/ph101gandhi.html.

[25] R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi—Encyclopedia of Gandhi’s Thoughts*, (Ahmedabad, India: Navjeevan Trust, 1960). www.mkgandhi-sarvodaya.org/momgandhi/momindex.htm, retrieved November 5, 2011.

[26] A Satyagrahi is a practitioner of Satyagraha.

[27] Prabhu and Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, (Ahmedabad, India: Navajivan Publishing House, 2005), p. 26.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., pp. 87-88.

[37] Ibid., p. 172.

[38] Ibid., p. 176.

[39] Ibid. p. 174.

[40] Ibid., p. 172.

[41] Ibid., p. 174.

[42] Manfred Steger, *Gandhi’s Dilemma: Non-Violent Principle and Nationalist Power* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), pp. 113-123.

[43] A Brahmachari is a practitioner of Brahmacharya.

[44] Gandhi, *An Autobiography*. www.mkgandhi.org/autobio/chap62.htm.

[45] Sun Myung Moon, “The Significance of July 1, 1973.” www.tparents.org/Moon-Talks/SunMyungMoon73/SM730701.htm, retrieved on November 29, 2011.

[46] Ibid.

[47] *World Scripture: A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts*, ed. Andrew Wilson (New York: Paragon House, 1991). www.unification.net/ws/theme100.htm, retrieved November 29, 2011.

[48] *Essentials of Unification Thought: The Headwing Thought* (Tokyo: Unification Thought Institute, 2007). www.tparents.org/library/unification/books/euth/Euth01-2.htm, retrieved November 30, 2011.

[49] Raychandbhai (1867-1901) was a respected Indian poet and Jain master whom Gandhi viewed as one of his teachers and as a friend.

[50] Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, pp. 171-172.

[51] Steger, *Gandhi’s Dilemma*, p. 123.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "Family Pledge." www.unification.net/misc/fampledge.html. Retrieved May 11, 2012.