



## **Pratidhwani the Echo**

*A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science*

**ISSN: 2278-5264 (Online) 2321-9319 (Print)**

**Impact Factor: 6.28 (Index Copernicus International)**

**UGC Approved, Journal No: 48666**

*Volume-VII, Issue-IV, April 2019, Page No.125-130*

*Published by Dept. of Bengali, Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India*

*Website: <http://www.thecho.in>*

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## **Peace: A Philosophical Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*The term “peace” has several meanings. It difficult to define peace in a single way. When a man is at peace, he is more engaged with his life. Among other things he feels relaxed, calm and safe, he is protected from stress and his immune system grows stronger. But this is such a concept that eludes man or rather man himself for one reason or another forgets this and is at tension or war with other individuals or groups. As a consequence it has degraded human value. “Peace” needs to be understood by focussing on certain paradigms. Five paradigms have been stated in this paper. Of the five paradigms, the fourth paradigm that is, non- violence, is discussed in this paper. The meaning of peace taken into account here is, „a state or period when there is no war“. When we speak of non-violence the first name that comes to our mind is that of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. This paper focuses on this aspect. This paper observes the fact that lasting peace is indeed possible to attain. It is something which can be achieved through hard work and collaboration.*

**Keywords: Peace, Paradigm, Non-Violence, Truth, Conflict.**

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November 11th is celebrated worldwide as Remembrance Day to recall the end of the hostilities of the First World War. World War I was formally concluded in the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1919. World War I was supposed to be 'the war to end all wars'. Question arises were we foolish to ever believe that this could be so? This is because even today in this 21<sup>st</sup> century if we open a newspaper, switch on the television, or browse the internet we begin to feel like the world has gone crazy. Our modern, global society is plagued by conflict and suffering. We are forced to think that the concept of peace is elusive. It should be kept in mind that peace cannot be attained merely through signing a treaty, or ending a world war. Peace is not simply the absence of armed conflict. Peace must be built, brick by brick, step by step.

Having said so, it is essential to define peace. Peace can be defined as a concept of harmonious well-being and freedom from hostile aggression. In a social sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict and freedom from fear of violence between individuals or heterogeneous groups. Conceptions of peace span religions and culture. It incorporates some values like security, harmony, justice and human dignity. Every major

systems of faith and belief, whether religious or secular, promise peace as an outcome of the implementation of its precepts in some way or the other. Implicitly, the meaning of peace is circumscribed to accommodate a system of largely implicit beliefs about how the world works, about what power consists of and about what is beneficial. As a result the peace ideal is co-opted by competing value priorities. It remains distant from our daily activities and experiences. As a result, “ideal” becomes separated from the “real”. This makes peace a pious invocation, a means to an end or an empty term of rhetorical self-justification. Hence, it is essential to bridge the gap between the “ideal” and the “real”. In this effort it is essential to find out the paradigms of peace.

Theoretical foundations of peace studies have found five paradigms of peace through intellectually challenging explorations. The five paradigms are considered as intellectual and practical models for peace making based on different sets of explicit as well as implicit beliefs and assumptions. The paradigms are as follows:

- (a) Power Politics: Peace through coercive power.
- (b) World Order: Peace through the power of law.
- (c) Conflict Resolution: Peace through power of communication.
- (d) Non-Violence: Peace through will-power.
- (e) Transformation: Peace through the power of love.

The first peace paradigm, power politics is the traditionally dominant framework in the field of international relations. This paradigm is grounded in the classic works as well as in more recent body of political theory of that of Machiavelli, Hobbes and those who advocate a pessimistic reading of human nature and a competitive model of international politics. Advocates of this paradigm refer this as “political realism”. They contend that there are no universal values that can be held by all in the international system. The absence of a world government or “higher power” makes politics among nations as anarchic and unpredictable. As there is no shared moral yardstick that can be used as a basis for stable co-operation among nations, states have no choice but to compete with each other. This is due to scarcity of resources and these sources are believed to provide security. Here justice is defined as an absence of gross abuses of human rights and peace is conceptualised as absence of war or temporary suspension of hostilities secured by military power. The proponents of power politics argue that if one want peace, one need to prepare for war”. Violence arises inevitably from human competitiveness and peace is secured through forceful imposition of order.

The second approach to peace is the world order paradigm. This paradigm proposes that sustained co-operation among states and other significant actors such as non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations are both possible and necessary. Cooperation is possible because human nature contains the potential for both selfishness and altruism. Cooperation is necessary because the unmitigated competition favoured by the power politics paradigm cannot be sustained. The world order paradigm paints a different picture of the world than the power politics paradigm. This picture focuses on the roles of concerned citizens and ethical values in politics. Whereas the “power politics”

paradigm views peace as a temporary absence of war within a self-help system of sovereign states, the world order paradigm equates peace with the presence of certain value conditions that are required for human flourishing and for long term survival within a global context. The world order paradigm proposes that if one wants peace then one needs to prepare for peace. Peace can be actively sought through policies and efforts that build consensus, reduce injustice, create opportunity and provide frameworks for responding to common challenges.

The third paradigm is conflict resolution. This is a highly pragmatic approach to peace. This works through the development and refinement of skills for analysing conflicts and responding to them with effective strategies of communication and negotiation. Where practitioners of world order concern themselves with micro-level, structural issues such as distributive justice and institutionalization of international cooperation, practitioners of conflict resolution focus more on process of interaction among individuals and groups and on the relationship that characterize them. According to conflict resolution paradigm, conflict is natural at all levels of human interaction and organization, from the interpersonal to the inter-ethnic and international levels. Although conflict can cause great human suffering, it does not inevitably lead to violence. Rather it is often necessary for major changes in relationships and social systems. To respond effectively to conflicts, the follower of conflict resolution, affirm the importance of empathy, creativity and “shared positive power” whether between individuals, groups or states. They approach peace through direct interaction with the “other”. They suggest that if one wants peace then one needs to develop the skills of communication and coexistence.

The fourth approach to peace is non-violence. This paradigm proposes that the power of any government derives primarily from the consent of the people and only secondarily from coercion. This is discussed extensively in this paper.

The final approach to peace making is the transformation paradigm. This paradigm focuses on the centrality of education, cultural change and spirituality in attempts to make peace a reality in daily life. From the standpoint of this paradigm, peace-making is not only an effort to end war or remove structural violence rather it is an internal process in which transformation of the individual becomes important for the broader changes. Transformation unites doing with being and task with experience.

All these paradigms taken together attest that the paths to peace are many. These paths are travelled not only by statesmen and diplomats but also by advocates, educators, volunteers and many other varieties of “ordinary” citizens. We need to exercise our reasoning faculties as well as our intuitive sense of what is “right”, “real” and “true” to make this world a better living place. This way we can make peace a more integral aspect of our lives. Of all the paradigms stated above the fourth paradigm i.e. non-violence is discussed in this paper. One of the main proponents of this paradigm is M.K Gandhi. In his words we find “...we are constantly being astonished at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible

discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence". Gandhi was neither a prophet nor even a philosopher. He claimed himself to be a practical idealist. He proposed the religion of non-violence not merely for the rishis and saints but also for the common people. According to him, non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The brute also has the spirit of non-violence implicitly within him but he is unaware of the fact. He is aware only about his brute physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law, to the strength of the spirit. Non-violence is the law of the human race. It is infinitely greater than and superior to this brute force. It is such a power which can be wielded by all be it children, young men, women alike. Gandhi warns that if non-violence is accepted as a law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not applied to isolated acts. Non-violence is not a weapon of expedience. Rather it is a spiritual weapon and he applied this at the mundane level. He made it clear that it is not the weapon of the weak and the coward. Rather to apply non-violence one needs to have courage and moral strength. Non-violence does not mean passivity or "doing nothing". It is an extremely active force within us. We all have access to it.

Gandhi's concept of peace and non-violence is integrally related to his world view. Gandhi evolved his world view from the concept of self and human nature. He accepted the inherent goodness of all human beings be it friends or enemies. Gandhi believed that a growingly militarized and violent society will actually lead to nothing. Violence is a downward path away from our humanity and closer to that of brute. Non-violence, on the other hand is closer to humanness. He believed that all humans are the part of the divine and they are inter-dependent and inter-related. If one person gains from non-violence then the entire humanity gains from him and vice versa. Truth is fundamental in Gandhi's philosophy of life. Throughout his life he experimented on and perfected on the notion of truth. For him truth is a sovereign principle and it includes several other principles. To him truth realization is equal to the realization of God. The quest for truth can be carried out by any means. A violent means to attain truth will lead to the possession of truth to only one individual. But it should be kept in mind that truth is never absolute in the sense that it is the property of only one individual. On the contrary it is relative; it can be achieved by all. Hence, if truth is achieved through non-violent means then a man can know the truth of others.

All these discussions lead to the fact that Gandhi's concept of peace is broad in nature. For him peace emerges from a way of life. The very first step to achieve non-violence is that we need to cultivate it in our daily life. We need to cultivate the virtues of truthfulness, humanity, tolerance, kindness and above all honesty. Hence, peace is intimately linked up with justice, development and environment. It must be kept in mind that non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is the soul force or the power of Godhead within us. An imperfect man cannot grasp the whole essence. God is the force among all forces known and unknown. Non-violence without reliance to that great force is poor. Consciousness of the living presence of God within one is undoubtedly the first requisite.

There are critiques who suggest that as Gandhi is an advocate of extreme form of non-violence, he is not a Hindu rather a Christian in disguise. To this his reply is that his religion is a matter solely between his Maker and his own self. If he is a Hindu, he cannot cease to be so even though he is disowned by the Hindu population. He in turn suggests that non-violence is the end of all religions. He stressed the fact that it was practised before and it needs to be practised again. Time is ripe to answer anger by love and violence by non-violence. He stressed that Hinduism believes in the oneness of all lives be it humans or animals. For example, Hinduism worships cow, which Gandhi thinks is a unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is the practical application of the belief in sacredness of all life. He stated that it is not only Hinduism (Jainism and Buddhism included) and Christianity; in Islam also we find the presence of ahimsa. The very word Islam means peace or non-violence but it has been misinterpreted through the ages.

All these are in theory. From the pragmatic aspect at the present moment humanity is passing through a very difficult period. The reality is that peace cannot be attained merely through signing a treaty, or ending a world war. Peace is not simply the absence of armed conflict. Violence and terrorism is the controlling force of today's international politics. Our governments seem paralyzed when it comes to dealing with the underlying issues that are causing so much conflict and suffering in the world -- key challenges like climate change, the rapid spread of disease, the continuing degradation of the environment, the never-ending cycle of extreme poverty. We already possess the resources and the technology necessary to solve these problems. What we are lacking is the political will to do so. In too many countries around the world, our leaders are polarized and gridlocked, or simply not interested in stepping forward in a courageous way to begin creating the building blocks necessary for lasting peace. After the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre, there is a realization that existing military solutions are inadequate to provide security to the people. People are living under a constant insecurity which is generating fear. This has led us to reconsider non-violence as a method to combat fear. But the tide is shifting. The global community is no longer prepared to put up with the injustices and brutal atrocities that plague our modern world. And they are not leaving it to world leaders to solve. They are standing up, gathering together, joining peaceful demonstrations, and spreading the word through social media.

One only has to look to the recent worldwide movement to demand justice in Israel and Palestine. It is a movement that does not discriminate. Male and female, young and old, Christians, Jews and Muslims have come together from every corner of the globe to form one of the largest, most powerful protests ever seen in the modern world. And the movement continues to gather momentum, with citizens urging major co-operations and organizations to divest themselves of holdings that perpetuate the state of war in the Middle East. This growing concern of International Community has been reflected in the declarations and decisions of international organizations including the United Nations. The United Nations in its 61st General Assembly declared October 2, the birthday of

Gandhi, as the International Non-Violence Day. The wide co-sponsorship of the draft resolution reflected the universal acceptance of the non-violent method successfully employed by Gandhi in South Africa and later in India. In conclusion it can be said that a lasting peace is indeed possible. It is something that we can attain with hard work and collaboration. It is already within our grasp, and reach. Peace begins with you and me. If this is kept in mind we can restore security, harmony, justice and human dignity in this universe.

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