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5. Que. → Write an essay on Gandhi's concept of non-violence (ahimsa).

Ans → The conception of ahimsa is the pivot (मोड़बंदी) round which the entire philosophy of Gandhi moves. So, in order to have a clear conception of Gandhi's philosophy we are to pay special attention to his conception of ahimsa. He represented several times that truth is a goal precedes non-violence. He considered non-violence as a hierarchical order of values. Non-violence is a necessary part of Gandhi's philosophy.

Gandhi's faith in non-violence is based on the assumption that all man are inherently good and that manifest evil is the product of a system or a set of circumstances. To do violence to the individual whole is the victim of circumstances is unjust and immoral, since it is possible to return the individual to his original good nature by removing those circumstances that endangered good and instilled evil. In applying non-violence to the resolution of political and social

problems, Gandhi invented a new technique of facilitated communication between conflicting groups.

Now, let us try to determine the Gandhian sense of the word 'Ahimsā'. It is not the case that Gandhi used the word 'Ahimsā' in some special sense. For Gandhi the word Ahimsā has both a negative and a positive import.

The usual meaning of Ahimsā is non-killing. But non-killing is merely one example of Ahimsā. Ahimsā, then, is conceived as non-injury. In any case, Ahimsā, is conceived as the opposite of himsā.

Positively, non-violence means love. Gandhi wrote, 'Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable.'

By showing love on the adversary ^{enemy} Gandhi believed one can win him over. For all human beings are inherently good and there is no human being who can resist for ever the force of love. Pure love or non-violence pre-supposes complete selflessness and freedom from passions. It involves through self purification and complete absence of hatred for any living being.

Gandhi pointed out that there are three fields for the operation of non-violence —

1. Non-violence may be used as a mode of effective operation against constituted authority.
2. It may be used as an instrument to resolve internal conflicts within a community.
3. It may be used as a way of resisting external ^{oppressive} aggression (i.e. unprovoked attack hostile act or feeling)

Gandhi again said that non-violence involves sacrifice and suffering. Only he can love who is selfless, who only believes in 'giving' and not in taking. Gandhi said, "The test of love is tāpasyā and tāpasyā is self-suffering." The essence of love, according to Gandhi is not enjoyment, it is suffering.

Some of the additional features of Gandhi's conception of non-violence can be mentioned as follows =

1. For Gandhi, non-violence is a ^{fundamental/central} cardinal virtue. He treated it to be higher virtue. He believed that without non-violence truth cannot be realised and therefore non-violence is to be treated as the highest virtue.

Gandhi employed the word dharma to mean virtue.

Truth for Gandhi was God that pervaded all things and preserved and unified them through non-violence or love. God can be realised by loving God, and to love God is to love the being in whom he is incarnate.

2. The ultimate criterion of non-violence is love and selflessness at heart. But Gandhi admitted that there are rare cases when violence is allowed. But such cases are extremely rare and they should not be employed as factors urging the rejection of non-violence.

3. The word non-violence has two aspects — one is positive and the other is negative. Negatively speaking non-violence means non-injury. For Gandhi non-injury was a virtue in so far as it expressed love

and good will. Ahimsā carried, for Gandhi, also the positive spirit of treating all beings as one's very-self (atmavat-samea-bhutesu). According to Gandhi the teaching of man non-violence is to be found in all the major religious texts of the world.

4. Gandhi pointed out that in most cases violence is the expression of fear. It is out of fear from known and unknown sources man arms himself and attack others. So, violence is an expression of inner weakness. Conversely non-violence is an expression of inner strength.

So, Gandhi's analysis of non-violence was based on the analysis of psychological and moral factors. But many contemporary psychologist may not agree with the Gandhian view that non-violence is the law of our species. Many psychologists point out that aggressive and violent ^{instincts} are rooted in the human psyche. Therefore complete transformation of man into practitioners of non-violence is not possible. But many thinkers believe that inspite of that the practice of non-violence is to be commended morally. The credit lies to Gandhi in the fact that he succeeded in making the principle of non-violence as the principle of socio-political dynamics in which tolerance works as the inner force in bringing about a true harmonious relation between man and man.

6. Relation between truth and non-violence →

According to Gandhi, the highest purpose of all human action is the realisation of truth, which he calls God and also "Sat Cit Ananda". Truth is the ideal of man's life. It is the goal towards which we must strive but what would be the nature of striving? What would be the way to approach truth? ^{that} ~~What~~ according to Gandhi is Ahimsa. Therefore truth is the end and Ahimsa is the means.

Thus here come Gandhi's philosophy 'the End and the Means'. In every ethical thought that seeks to reflect upon the nature and standard of morality the popular regarding means and ends becomes a significant problem. In fact these two concepts have become central in his thought. Mahatma Gandhi believed in the spiritual nature of human existence and therefore his unshakable faith in truth and Ahimsa naturally lead him to equate the name with end and means. Therefore Gandhi's philosophy of 'end and means' has a direct relation with his doctrine of truth and Ahimsa.

Gandhi's ~~assertion~~ assertion that end and means are intimately related with each other is a common sense assertion. But he goes beyond common sense ~~when~~ ^{when} he says that means and ends are convertible terms in his philosophy of life. (This assertion is not to be taken too literally because

it merely throws life on the essentially inseparable character of the two) the 'end' is the 'goal' the 'means' is the 'way' of the realisation of the 'goal'. Means cannot be set apart from the end just as the way cannot be separated from the goal.

Therefore Ahimsā cannot be separated from truth. Ahimsā ^{or} Non-Violence is the only another name for truth. According to Gandhi Truth and Non-Violence are only two sides of the same coin. Non-Violence is the practical impression of truth.