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"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind." Gandhi, here, describes his experience after he was imprisoned and beaten by British officers. His quote refers to how the British beat Gandhi as much as they could, but the British were never able to change his beliefs and goals. Generally known as Mahatma Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the dominant leader of the Civil Rights Movement in British-ruled India. Using non-violent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to its independence and inspired movements for non-violence, civil rights, and freedom across the globe.

Gandhi believed the search for truth was the goal of mankind, but since no one could ever be sure of having attained the truth, he recognized violence as a way to apply one's own view of the truth (Bilgrami 4160). This philosophy significantly contributes to the development of one's moral character. Gandhi once said, *"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."* In his assertion, Gandhi emphasized the importance of living a moral life. This statement instigated many Indians to join the Civil Rights Movement in India. As an interpretation of this quote, Gandhi tried to get Indians, under the control of the British, to either join the Civil Rights Movement as if they were going to get killed or acknowledge the philosophy of morality so they could apply it everywhere as if they were going to live forever. This statement has influenced many young people around the world to make a significant difference in their life.

Gandhi's beliefs come down to one central idea: non-violence. He put the idea of non-violence into very meaningful words: *"All beings are fond of life; they like pleasure and hate pain, shun destruction and like to live, they long to live. To all, life is dear"* (Chapple 11). Non-violence is essentially the desire to live in a world where violence does not exist. Not only is it the idea of not using violence, but more deeply, it is the idea of ignoring the destruction and living life to the fullest.

Gandhi was extremely dedicated to non-violence. For example, non-violent demonstration strikes hit the British hard, but it led to thousands of Indians being jailed. In 1922, the peaceful strikes erupted into violence. A mob of Satyagrahis lit fire to a police station, killing two dozen police officers trapped inside. Gandhi called off the entire Satyagraha and apologized for his this attack; he had mistakenly believed his followers actually understood non-violence (Wolpert 64). The way Gandhi quickly recognized the violence his followers were using made him who he is today: the most successful and influencing Civil Rights leader.

Even though violence reclaimed itself in India after he died, Mohandas Gandhi, the "Great Soul," was anything but a failure. In a world kept alive by bestial acts, Mahatma Gandhi restored the idea of non-violence as the only way of maintaining peace. His character influenced and inspired many later peaceful struggles. For example, the Civil Rights Movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. was a great success because of King's influences from Gandhi. Gandhi never lost faith in non-violence: "My faith is as strong as ever. [. . .] There is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives; that would be their failure, never of the eternal law" (Merton 74-75).

Sources

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