

# Impact of Gandhi as Communicator on Followers: Hurling Shoes versus Offering Diamond Ring

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## Abstract

One of the greatest personalities of the twentieth century, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, had such an aura of his simplicity that the masses did not question the object of his movement but simply followed him. As a communicator Gandhi has impressed the political leaders word over. The only weapon that Gandhi used was non-violence. Gandhi argued that any method that favors violence will not be suitable, for solving the problems rather they can themselves become the problems. In this paper, Gandhi has been compared with other communication personalities on the basis of his ideas of truth & untruth citing many cases from the contemporary world history.

**Keywords:** Mahatma Gandhi, Violence, Truth, Communicator

## 1. Introduction

One of the greatest personalities of the twentieth century, and one of those few who changed the world through non violence methods, and ultimately a practical man for all fronts of sociological, political, economic and religious problems, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, has equally impressed all races, religions, forms of governments, and all persons of all ages. In India, he is treated as the Father of Nation and with bestowed love is called Bapu the father. It is not only for the affection and the regard of this great man that he is treated as father but the way of life of this man has impressed one and all. His book 'My Experiments with Truth' is an evidence of how practical and honest this man was. "Chal pade kadam jis oar chal pade koti pag usi oar" has been the proverb during the freedom movement. People did not ask what Gandhi wanted rather saw him moving in the direction and thousands of people marched in the same direction. This was the impact of the aura of his simplicity that the mass did not question the object of his movement but simply followed him.

When every thing about the freedom was almost set, and the British agreed to transfer the power to elected Indians, Gandhi emerged as the sole communicator to decide the fate of India. Although a number of schools of thoughts for the transfer of

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power were emerging, yet Gandhi prevailed over all such schools. One of the thoughts was that Ballabh Bhai Patel should be made the Prime Minister of India keeping in mind his stature and nature of his work. But Gandhi visualized that the new India cannot bear the hardness of the political leaders. Hence, Gandhi advocated for Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister because Nehru was considered as the liberal and socialist and ultimately he won the score over others. On the question of division of India and making of Pakistan, Gandhi did emerge as the central figure. The Muslim League did not support the idea of unified India with Mohammal Ali Jinnha as Prime Minister. Though after partition, Jinnha treated as Kayade Azam but never was elevated to the Father of nation of Pakistan as Gandhi was elevated to. This shows the major difference between Gandhi and his contemporaries. Mohammad Ali Jinnah before his death accepted that the division of India and creating a separate state for the Muslims was a great mistake. Only a visionary communicator visualizes the environment and construct the message and so did Mahatma Gandhi.

As a communicator, Gandhi has impressed the political leaders world over. The President of United State of America, Barak Hussain Obama has openly accepted that he got inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi. President of the South Africa Nelson Mandela is called another Gandhi for his struggle for the freedom and spending twenty six years in jail and several times almost touching the gallows for death sentence. The United Nations Organization unanimously adopted the resolution in his favor and put his statue in the UNO head quarter premises.

His statues have been installed in the Parliament houses of a number of countries. Prime roads have been named after him. Squares have been made to mark Gandhi presence. Many countries have given Gandhi rare honor by issuing the postal stamps in his name. The only weapon that Gandhi used was non-violence.

Truth and untruth both are the factors to be considered while one compares Gandhi with other communication personalities. World has witnessed that whenever any nation with the help of untruth, has moved, the country has been defeated. Pakistan has always taken the path of planting untruth stories on terrorism. The foreign ministers and the presidents have time and again, concealed the presence of the terrorists on its soil. India gave so many evidences against the Mumbai terror attack, but Pakistan always denied. The world listened the voice of Hafiz Saeed on telephone talking to terrorists and given them instructions, but Pakistan simply favored him and still not putting him behind the bars. The result has been that Pakistan is called a Failed State. What Gandhi said, "Never leave the path of truth, speak the truth and the world will love you." "Once you accept the guilt and speak the truth forever you are relieved", he said. Pakistan is not following the Gandhian path of truth and is facing the crisis of national identity. The political leaders as well as the army officer have lost the credibility because of the policy of untruth. USA has extended million of dollar support to Pakistan for getting information on Osama Bin Laden and his followers. Pakistan used him as trump against the USA and continued extracting dollars. Ultimately, Pakistan was exposed to the world when USA Seals killed Bin Laden right in the heart of the city and with the cover of the Pakistan Army. The entire world saw the naked pictures of the Pakistani untruth story. Here Gandhi-way has won and non-Gandhi-way has lost.

The other example is related with the super power using untruth and false strategy against gulf countries. The USA mongered rumor that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destructions known as WMDs. America got the approval of the UNO by distorting the facts and concealing the reality from the world. In fact there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq at all. But millions of people including civilians and American soldiers lost their lives. This was the game for gaining nothing and paying heavily. Here also Gandhi's theory of communication seems applied. When Gandhi says that if you walk on the path of untruth and trouble others, one day this will be unbearable for you unless you accept the truth publicly. Though the commission of inquiry into the weapons of mass destruction in its report has specially mentioned that Iraq was not capable of making such weapons at all and there is not truth in the fact that Iraq was in the possession of weapons of mass destruction. Even after the exposure, America had no remorse. Gandhi says that if no body watches or sees your misdeeds, it is the God who watches every thing and will punish one day. It became a reality. American President was given a shoe salute by a Journalist right in Iraq when the President-the most powerful person in the world was addressing the press conference.

The Example: It was 14 December 2008, President George W Bush before relinquishing the office of the President of United States of America was in Baghdad, Iraq for morale boosting of its soldiers and getting final salute from them. The President paid a surprise visit to the army camps. It is a general practice that the presidents of USA do not visit army camps openly, as the consequences on open visit could be a fatal. No body was thus informed about the visit. Every thing was going as planned. But suddenly the President decided to meet the press and inform them about the developments in the Iraq war. The newsmen from all over the world immediately reached the press conference hall. The President started briefing the press in the notion that he is the boss of the world community. While commenting on the situation, the President did not care for the ethics and commented on the Islamic support to the terrorists. This was not a correct version that terrorism has to do any thing with Islam or the Islam has any thing to do with the terrorism. The USA sees every Muslim as terrorist and believes that every terrorist comes from the Islamic schools of thought. Any human being will be annoyed with such useless and uncalled remarks. One of the journalists Muntadhar al-Zaidi from Iraq suddenly took out one of his shoes and threw it on the face of George W Bush who escaped by bending. The listener- the man who threw the shoe i.e. Zaidi could not digest the venomous remarks. Throwing the first shoe he said, "This is a farewell kiss from the Iraqi people, you dog". This was not enough for the communicator (George W Bush) for receiving the feedback for this message. While investing his second shoe for the sake of the Iraqis, he threw it on the face of the president and shouted in Arabic, "This is for the widows and orphans and all those killed in Iraq". Two shoes with two messages. Two communicators with two different messages. One President Bush was giving to the world that he escaped and the second Zaidi was giving that he did what the president deserved. The aggressor got the punishment as Gandhi said long back.

After three days on 17 December 2008, "pink Code" a group against the war, pelted shoes on the effigy of George Bush just in front of the White House- the official power station of USA. The

protestors were showing the posters of the hero of the shoe attack Zaidi. This is also fact that Zaidi himself got the shoes in one of the functions he was attending. It was tit for tat. But what Zaidi did was different what Zaidi's opponents did. Zaidi had a message that the world cannot be hijacked by policing the peaceful countries through UNO resolutions for carrying out the war on them. There was a message that the Islamic countries do not have valuable citizens for sacrificing on the fictitious predictions on this or that reason. Gandhian concept of communication has very much being applied here. Bush got the due for his wrong, so got Zaidi for his violent action against the aggressor. Gandhi gave a message that the problems of the world cannot be solved by the weapons. Any method that favors violence will not be suitable for solving the problems rather they can themselves become the problems. In this way George W Bush and Zaidi both become the problems.

Now where is Gandhi in this situation?. Mahatma Gandhi does exist in all the examples. Hurling shoes and not hurting the individual is a democratic right of the humanity. If by virtue of being the rich or wealthy and powerful, the humanity is abused, then, the humanity has the equal right to rebuke the abuser. President George W Bush carried out a vicious campaign against Islamic countries telling to the world that all terrorists have come from the Islamic countries. When the world did not listen to the voice of Uncle Sam, the USA went to the UNO and got the undue authority to attack the Islamic countries. One by one, the big uncle started destroying the holy principles of the Islam. The poor citizens were captured and brutally murdered. The USA service men urinated on the dead bodies of the innocent citizens. In some cases, the army did not hesitate in urinating in the mouth of the local citizens during interrogations. These atrocities ultimately spread hatred and anguish among the Islamic world. Afghanistan became the first victim of the vicious campaign. Its USSR supported Abdulla government was overthrown by the Taliban Militia- a group of young military men defying foreign rulers. Gandhi did not believe in the violence, but the Taliban involved in the violent activities. As Gandhi believed that if you are wrong, you cannot survive very long. The same happened to Taliban. The Government of Taliban was over thrown by the international community and once again Gandhian theory of communication proved to be the best.

The second time Gandhian school of communication proved to be right was when Saddam Hussain the President of Afghanistan tried to crush the democratic rights of the public and started killing the opposition leaders. Under the impression that he will last long and no body can challenge his authority. Under dictator Saddam, the wishes of the public were totally crushed down. After the brutal rule for thirty years, Saddam faced his last days through gallows. What Gandhi said about the aggressors proved to be true. Freedom is every body's moral and birth right in which Gandhi believed, was also the right of the Iraqis.

After Afghanistan and Iraq, it was the turn of Iran. The USA started campaigning against Iran by telling the world that Iran's nuclear thrust is not for the peaceful purposes, rather is a quest for nuclear bomb for getting supremacy among the gulf countries. Time and again, Iran has advocated before the world community that its nuclear installations are open to world community for inspection for nuclear safety. According to Iran, the truly representatives from the neutral countries, can inspect

the premises at any time but it will not allow any USA team to visit the sites.

Gandhi's service to humanity is not just for the freedom movement, but it is reflected through his life style. When Gandhi started his nation wide visit, he came across several type of persons including hungry, thirsty, ill, and some naked or without proper clothes. In such a case Gandhi saw a women taking bath in the half sari. He became emotional and flew his own dhoti in the water to reach to her. This event has been shown very effectively as a message in Lord Attenburg's "Gandhi" played by Ben Kingsley. If Gandhi can offer his dhoti to the needed woman, why, then, a youth like Zaidi, not sacrifice his beloved's diamond ring to the memorial of Gandhi at Raj Ghat. in New Delhi.

It is to recall that on the recommendation and request of Mahesh Bhatt - a noted film producer and director, Muntadhar - al Zaidi was given visa for 24 hours. A gentleman has to decide the best use of the visa time of twenty four hours. So did Zaidi. In the afternoon, he reached Rajghat and offered prayer. It was surprising to note from the prayer of this man. A man who used violence by hurling shoes on the President of USA just to convey the message, is himself convinced with the fragrance of the stones where ashes and the bones of Gandhi are kept as the memorial. He was so much impressed and moved that he wanted to offer some precious thing to Gandhi. He then offered his best love token - a diamond ring gifted by his beloved girl friend. After removing the ring from his finger, Zaidi kept silent for few minutes comparing Gandhi with Bush. He offered him his own shoes and here he removed his shoes outside the gate, and removed his best belongings the diamond ring as mark of honor. There cannot be an example like this in the world's contemporary history. This happens only in India as it is the land of Mahatma Gandhi -the father of the nation, It is the land of Vivekanand- the brother of the world.

Some young generation may stand against the Gandhi concept of Communication. They argue that Gandhi has become irrelevant but they forget that legends are never forgotten. They are beyond time and race. Gandhi will remain in the heart of the people. He has become invisible inspiration for even to those who believe in violence. For such people he is the last hope of returning to the mainstream of humanity. i.e. non violence way of leading a peaceful life in the society.

