
Violence, A Means For Making Victims' Life

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Abstract

The violence, which is of two types- direct violence and passive violence, affects society in many ways. Apart from the direct violence, passive violence penetrates the mind of social human beings in various ways. So violence is apparently a subject of fear to all the human beings in modern society. Philosophy warns the violence performers to stay away from performing the violence. But it has a beneficial side which develops the social functionaries as well as spiritual features of the victims of violence. Violence always leads people into challenging situations. The violence and effort to overcome the violence are like stepping stones to the sharpening of the skill in the social context. The people fail to protect violence in the social context and dip into the ocean of despair; they begin to know the reality to the best of their capacity. They, as in void of practical solution, try to solve their problems by cultivating inner spiritual capacity. As the victims of violence try to find the reality amidst appearance and try to solve all worldly problems through the knowledge of reality, which paves the way to having spiritual benefit.

KEYWORDS: Ahimsā, Dharma, knowledge/Jnana, devotion/Bhakti, action/ Karma, Violence

In modern society violence is a common factor and it perforates the society in many ways. The violence is of two types – direct violence and passive violence. Direct violence must be physical and related to bloodshed. One can consciously perform this violence in pre-planned and organised way. The victims of violence, whether aware of the violence or not, can protect the violence physically if they are able to protect. Other kind of violence viz. Passive violence is prevailing in society day in and day out. Performer of this violence may be conscious or not of the violence. Though this type of violence is not related to bloodshed, it is more harmful than the former. This type of violence affects mind directly and tends the victims gradually to mentally sick and mind also weakens health. People, who perform this violence, more often are not aware of the violence, but victims of violence feel the violence so deeply that they cannot but react mentally against it. As the victims are aware of the violence in respect of direct violence, they always remain preventive but in case of passive violence the victims too, feel the violence by heart, albeit they cannot protest against it, only they prepare themselves to reply it in future. In both cases of direct and passive violence

victims of violence are hurt intensively, though the performer of violence may be conscious of the victims' hurt or not.

I want to highlight only passive or indirect violence, more accurately, the violence which are not related to bloodshed but penetrate the heart of the people of the society in various ways. Day by day the passive violence is being organised furiously in society and the victims feel its effect deeply. For example, one, on his/her way to destiny, may throw a banana skin on the pavement and other feel it furious when s/he steps on it and slips and breaks or fractures his/her leg. Examples of such violence are too common to be avoided in any way. Thus this type of violence is always prevailing in society, better to say, is common feature of the modern society. When one viz. Violence performer enjoys it either consciously or unconsciously, other viz. victims feel it by heart.

Philosophy warns the violence performers to stay away from performing the violence as the violence makes people furious, angry, consequently destroys their potentialities, creativity above all their spirituality, the backbone of the social livelihood. Indian philosophy, particularly *Jaina* philosophy and *Yoga* philosophy directly place *Ahimsā* or non-violence as one of the most important virtues for reaching the final human destination viz. Liberation. *Jainas* accept five vows (*vratas*) and they are *Ahimsā* or non-violence, *Satya* or truth, *Asteya* or not to steal, *Brahmacharya* or abstention, *Aparigraha* or disowning of possessions. So, *Ahimsā* or non-violence is considered by *Jainas* as most influence to both the clergy and the laity for staying rightful in social life. *Ahimsā* has two sides- negatively it means non-injury or non-violence in thought, word and deed, abstention from inflicting injury to anybody, and positively it means help to any suffering creatures. Thus *Ahimsā* is first and foremost one of the five vows to realise potentially *jinas* (derived from the sanskrit root 'ji', which means 'to conquer', and *jinas* means victor i.e. one that has successfully subdued his passions and obtained mastery over himself)¹ in laity as well as clergy. All human beings can cultivate the *Ahimsā* in such a way that they can pave the way to liberation by their own effort.

In *Yoga* philosophy the word '*yoga*' means union, more accurately union of *jīvātman* or individual self with *paramātmān* or supreme self, as well as, path to *yoga* or union. *Yoga* or union has an instrumental value as well that is why is seen both as a means to end and an end itself. The path or means to union, as advocated by *Yoga* Philosophy, is of eight fold- *Yama* (abstention), *Niyama* (self-culture), *Āsana* (posture), *Prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses from their objects), *Dhāraṇa* (fixing the mind on the object of meditation), *Dhyāna* (meditation) and *Samādhi* (concentration).² Five vows of *Jainas*, discussed above, are included in the *Yama* by the *Yoga* Philosophy. *Yama* and *Niyama* are moral training. So, *Ahimsā* or non-injury is the most important to be the beginning of *Yama* and the remaining four

virtues help to make it perfect in such a way that it should be practised from core of the heart irrespective of time, place and circumstance.

Gandhiji, too, admits all these five virtues following Indian Ethics and tradition, but he interprets these virtues in his own way, in terms of his own experiences. According to him, these virtues must be interpreted in such a way that they should be consistent with the up-to-date condition and needs of the society. Gandhiji also gives emphasis, probably by being influenced by *Jainas* and *Yoga* Philosophy, on *Ahimsā* and considers *Ahimsā* as the most important virtue. It should be practised alike by men, women and children as a means to attain the Truth which is according to him, God. The moral aspect of *Ahimsā* is nothing but tolerance and love, and it presupposes the maxim that all persons are equal. Therefore, for the realisation of God, love for every being, a presupposition of the virtue *Ahimsā*, is a necessary condition. Gandhiji regards *Ahimsā* as the highest virtue (*ahimsāparamodharmah*), and, among other things, the reason for his preference are the following: - (a) No virtue can be practised unless all beings are allowed to live. We cannot do any duty to any fellow being unless he lives, (b) all other virtues presuppose love. All virtues require some amount of self-sacrifice and this is not possible without love.³ For this reason, he guided his own life and wanted to guide all other people's life on the vow of *Ahimsā*.

Though philosophy always tries to restrain people from performing violence, intense ignorance and lack of interest in philosophy are, directly or indirectly, responsible for making people violent in modern era. Not only philosophy, the politically empowered state and the people responsible for governing the state are, more or less, failure to keep the violence performer away from injuring common people. In recent time, when direct violence agitates different parts of the world and the canon of the state is in front of the cannon, indirect or passive violence is rapidly infected in the mind of common people because of huge ego centric attitude, selfishness, tendency to keep moral values away. As the violence is increasing day by day and philosophy tries to make only the violence performer restrained, violence is a grace on the part of victims of violence in modern context. If we look at the victims of violence, we must realise that the violence is a grace to the victims, because victims of violence try to get rid of violence their best and it makes them fit to survive in all sphere of life, both social and spiritual.

If we look into the society, we see that violence is indispensable part of social life. Violence is an utmost trouble to social human beings. This trouble helps them to sharpen their intellect. An untroubled mind very soon becomes stagnant; loses its creativity. Violence always leads people into challenging situations. So the violence and effort to overcome the violence are like stepping stones to the sharpening of the skill in the social context. The victims of violence are always submersed in the whirlpool of trouble and try to turn back to easy and comfortable situation. Thus violence makes backbone to bear adverse situation and sharpens inner credibility of

victims as future suitable citizen for repaying back the appropriate timely reply to the violence performers. Even, if they do not repay, they at least try to make themselves as an instance in society. Their effort to protect themselves from the violence is of two types- society permitted effort and society unpermitted effort. Some violence affected people fight against violence taking society approved way. For example, in student life, some are either mentally or physically or both mentally and physically tortured by their class mates or teachers for either their social backwardness or their economical backwardness or both social and economical backwardness. For any type of backwardness, the victim students are not properly responsible, but they are improperly treated by the others either consciously or unconsciously. In this case victims try to protect themselves against such violence being a socially established citizen in future and when they fail to be so, they sometimes take anti-social activity to fight against violence performer properly. In both case, whether socially permitted or not, victims of violence try their best to motivate themselves cultivating their power and strength to get success. Both the way, whether socially permitted or not, help the human beings to strengthen mental power which is really grace in social context where 'survival is the fittest' is the only motto. Though the socially disapproved way is bad for society, violence compels violence affected people to take this way. Society should be careful to eradicate violence from preventing crime in society.

Some may say that there are some instances which shows that victims of violence are defeated and loss all energies to fight against the violence and they have lost themselves in the current of whirlpool of the society. They give themselves in to the fate. Obviously such instances prove that the victims of violence compel to realise spiritual unity and being defeated in social context they are compelled to have spiritual ideology and try to survive getting spirituality as the only path for defending violence. The tendency to betake God as the only saviour after fighting truth and nail against evil power in the society is very popularly seen in the nature of human beings. But I think, this tendency also helps human beings for a better way to keep away them from the existing violence in the society and to realise their innate immortal entity. Then they can avoid the effect of violence by their super-realization of the unity of *Jivātman* with the *Paramātman*.

Defeat is the pillar of success. This popular saying is true in this context. When one is defeated despite trying heart and soul, giving all energy and capacity to evil power of violence, s/he gives up fighting against violence and turns from the social context to spiritual context. Violence affected people turn themselves away from the bodily aspects of human life and try to solve all the worldly problems giving importance on reality which is self, eternal and universal aspect of human life. They, as in void of practical solution, try to solve their problems by cultivating inner spiritual capacity. Their realisation of their unity with the Supreme Being forces them to consider themselves as same with the Supreme reality. The Upaniṣad is the source of such

realisation. The Upaniṣadic mind was already steeped in the belief that there is an all pervasive reality underlying all thing which arise from, exist in and return to it; that there is some reality by knowing which immortality can be attained. The name given to this Reality is sometimes *Brahman* (God), sometimes *Ātman* (Self), sometimes simply Sat (Being). The system of Advaita Vedanta may be summarized in half a verse which runs as follows: *Brahman* is the only Reality; the world is ultimately false; and the individual soul is non-different from *Brahman*. *Brahman* and *Ātman* are synonymous terms. The world is the creation of *Māyā*. The individual selves on account of their inherent *Avidyā* imagine themselves as different from *Brahman* and mistake *Brahman* as this world of plurality, even as we mistake a rope as a snake. *Avidyā* vanishes at the dawn of knowledge- the supra-relational direct and intuitive knowledge of the non-dual self which means liberation.⁴ The great sayings or *Mahāvākyas* of Upanisad “That thou art” (*Tat tvam Asi*) and “I am *Brahman*” (*Aham Brahma Asmi*) mean that the principle underlying the world as a whole, and that which forms the essence of man, are ultimately same. The establishment of the spiritual character of *Brahman* and the removal of the uncertainty about its existence are both accomplished by its identification with *ātman* or self. So long as the *jiva* or *Jivātman* or individual self does not discard ignorance leading to duality and does not realize its own true nature, he remains the individual self. Slumbering in ignorance, when he is awakened by the Upanisadic knowledge, he realize that he is not the body , senses, or mind , but is the non dual universal Self- *tat tvam asi*(that thou art).This knowledge of the reality (*Jñāna*) helps them realise that violence cannot be obliterated by violence; rather violence should be won by non-violence. The knowledge that the *jiva* or individual self is non-different from *Brahman* helps to remove the ignorance having the false notion of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’ from the *jiva* and also to realise that ultimately there is no difference at all between *jiva* and *Brahman*. Their heart becomes violence free and they try to defend the violence devoting themselves entirely to *Brahman*. They begin to believe that *Brahman* is only pivotal entity to save them. This devotion to *Brahman* or self-surrender to *Brahman* (*Bhakti*) is the best virtue which is the outcome of defeat from violence in social context. Their attraction to worldly object becomes so little that they cannot feel any possessiveness for the object. In this state they only feel that they have only right to do the work, not to expect the result of the work. If they are indifferent to the result, then it can produce neither joy nor pain as they desire nothing from the result. Gita advises-

“karmanyebādhikarastemāphalesukadāchana|
Mākarmaphalaheturbhurmātesangohastvakamarni||” II- 47⁵

Your only right is to do the work, not to expect anything from the result of the work. You should give up the consequence of work, not the work itself. This is known as *karma-yoga*. As they feel the advice of Gita automatically and they get rid of the consequences of work, they become above both joy and sorrow (*karma*). Thus, defeat

to violence in social context brings human beings to the aura of spirituality and they consider everything in the light of *Dharma* and *Dharma* is the collection of knowledge/*Jñāna*, devotion/*Bhakti*, and action/*Karma*.

When we know discrimination between eternal (*nitya*) and non-eternal (*anitya*), possessiveness of non-eternal possession must be removed. Śankaracārya defines knowledge as *nityānityavastuvivekah-* reflection on the distinction between the permanent and impermanent.⁶ Only *Brahman* is eternal, all other things different from *Brahman* are non-eternal. Eternal or *nitya* is not limited by time or *kāla*, and its opposite i.e., which is limited by time, is called non-eternal or *anitya*. Everything in the world is passing, ephemeral, transient. The wise one does not invest in the world. He looks for the permanent in and through the impermanent. You ultimately merge with the permanent. Through this knowledge human beings can give up lust, greed and attachment around these possessions and ultimately possessiveness for non-eternal possessions is rooted out from the mind, the mind will be calm and wants nothing for future. As the possessiveness is the main cause of violence, removal of possessiveness helps the victims of violence to remove the effect of violence from the mind.

Even, sometimes they, authenticated by religious Scriptures, believe that God will come to the world as incarnation (*avatāra*) assuming human form to save the virtue or *dharma* and to destroy evil powers in society.⁷

“Jadājadā hi dharmasyaglanirbhavatibhārata |
AbhyūhānamadharmasyatadātmanamSrjamyaham ||” IV-7

God’s appearance as *avatāra* or incarnation possessing a body in space and time is called birth or *janma*. But this *janma* of *avatāra* is different from the birth of common people. The birth of common people is under the law of *karma*, but God’s birth as *avatāra* is independent of law of *karma*. Though the God is beyond the birth and death, He is eternal and immanent in all elements (*sarvabhūte*), He with the help of His own magical power, called *ātmanāya* creates Himself, which is called *avatāra*. *Māya* is the unthinkable power (*achinta-sakti*), which is called *avaktya*, *prakṛti* or primal in *Sāṃkhya* Philosophy, by which He creates this apparent world and sometimes Himself as *avatāra*. God is both unqualified (*nirguṇa* or *akṣara*) and qualified (*saguṇa* or *kṣara*). As the non-qualified He is beyond birth and death, but as the qualified He is appearance (*byāya*), under birth and death. So guided by the second type i.e. qualified or *saguṇa* He creates Himself as *avatāra* with the help of His magical power *māyā* inherent in Himself. The object of being *avatāra* is to restore *dharma* or virtue.⁸

“ Paritrāṇāyasādhuṇāmbināśāyacaduskṛtām |
Dharmasamsthāpanahāyasambhābāmiyugyuge ||” IV-8

Dharma has two sides- one, Social which may be considered as outer, and other, spiritual or inner. When some crises like political, economical etc. are seen in society, it is called outer or social downfall of *dharma*. On the other hand, when some crises are seen in the humanity or human nature, it is called the downfall of spiritual side of *dharma*. Particularly *avatāra* comes down the earth to defend spiritual downfall of *dharma*, not necessarily for defending the social and political crisis, because it can be protected by human beings in many ways. *Avatāra*, living along with human beings in society, try to represent himself as an instance before human beings for enlightening their soul and makes human beings understand the purity of soul, which is not different from Supreme Soul. Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna, Chaitanya are such *avatāras* who came to the society to protect humanity from erosion of *dharma*, and directed human beings to do their respective work selflessly without keeping any division of caste, creed, and religion in mind, enlightened human mind with the knowledge of reality.

As the violence would never be effaced entirely from society, rather better to say, violence is always looking askance at the society, the victims of violence always try to defend themselves either in society approved way or socially unapproved way. But when all their efforts in either of these two ways are in vain, they take refuge in spirituality. The spirituality, through *jñāna* or knowledge, *karma* or action and *bhakti* or devotion, elicits them and makes the social life comfortable. They can easily digest the blow of violence, because they devote the effect of violence like all other effects to the Supreme Being and feel nothing for anything good or evil. Thus the violence is a grace to them for taking refuge in Supreme Being.

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