



## Mahatma Gandhii And Religion

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Religion is an Integration of various moral aspects of human life. Ethics is held to be the Science and Ideals. In other words and particular system of faith and worship is titled as religion in which a pursuit or Interest is followed with great devotion.

Gandhii was primarily a man of religion and his religion was based on truth, love and non-violence. He said that religion can become a basis for friendship among all mankind. He strongly believed that religion does not teach mutual enmity. He claimed that religion is a binding force and not a dividing force.

He believed in the concept of “Sarvadharmā Samanātva” which means equal respect for all creeds and faiths. By being a Hindu, Gandhiji considered religion as being most tolerant and that it gives scope for worshipping all prophets of the world. Gandhiji once quoted that Hindum tells everyone to worship god according to his / her faith or dharma. Gandhiji’s religion was spiritual humanism.<sup>1</sup>

His idea of religion was not totally esoteric. He knew that every religion was connected with some belief system supported by rituals. To Gandhiji religion was a Human Institution made by human ingenuity to solve practice affairs as well as spiritual matters.

His father was the dewan of Porbandar, his deeply religious mother was a devoted practitioner of Vaishnavism, influenced by Jainism, an ascetic religion governed by tenets of self discipliner and non-violence.

There has been a strong influenced of religion on Gandhi’s political ideas. Religion pervaded his life as he wanted religion to pervade other lives too.

### Gandhiji studied Christianity through

New testament, the life’s prophet Mohammad, besides Tolstoys, “The Kingdom of God is within you” and Ruskin’s “Unto this last” etc.<sup>2</sup> all this developed Gandhiji’s spiritual Humanism with the help of following classified

paragraphs with headings we can come to know more about Gandhiji and his religious aspect.

### **Hinduism**

There has been a strong influence of religion on Gandhi's political ideas. A Hindu by belief and conviction for him. Rama-nama from the Ramayana of Tulsidas was his infallible guide. But Gita was his "Dictionary of daily references". Gandhiji's life was more in accord with the decryption of a Karma-yogi than a Sanyasm. Gandhi's thought reverberates with the ideas of renunciation of wants but not of action. Gandhiji and his own life practiced renunciation by limiting his wants to the minimum.

He did not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. He showed a theosophical approach religion and its essential teachings. He believed implicitly in the Hindu aphorism that no one truly knew.

Varna-ashrama was, in his opinion. Inherent in human nature and Hinduism had simply reduced it to a science. The four divisions of society, in his view, were natural and self-sufficing.

Gandhi was very particular about what to eat bring a strict vegetarian in accordance with the Hindu belief that eating flesh involves killing of animals which he decried.

### **The Quran**

His insistence on conscience and soul force is derived from the Quran more than from elsewhere for in no other religious texts are moral disciplines so explicitly and clearly prescribed. Prohibition of Intoxicants, prayer and fasting were not merely a mode of personal satisfaction to him, these were a complete code of ethics.

Gandhi identified the secular elements in Islam and proved that Islam confirmed to the basic Hindu Philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

### **The New Testament (Christianity)**

Gandhian doctrines of trusteeship was derived from the New testament his economic doctrines were inspired by the Christian preaching that love and trust

between capitalists and workers is the solution to the problems of economic exploitation.

Christianity appeared to Gandhi for the social philosophy which it inheres. Gandhiji adopted the commandments as a code of personal conduct and social ethics. The virtues of charity and love so boldly written in the Gospel become his watchword. He was too against the type of fasting which was resorted to for personal gain or propaganda. He considered a fast or Satyagraha as a means of self purification and not a method of pressuring.

About the poor also, his attitudes was greatly shaped by the Biblical precepts which contain a consistent, non-materialistic substance.

#### Dharma

Gandhi's great mission in life was to vindicate politics as an unfolding of the vast potentialities of Dharma or to galvanize politics by ethics. He saw Dharma in the image of truth, in line with the ancient Hindu Sages and sought the solution of all problems in righteous conduct.

#### Karma

Gandhiji was a devotee of Karma, a Karma yogi. He believed that the man can fulfill three Ashramas of life-time. Simultaneously, Dharma, Artha and Kama which meant the superiority of a Grahastha, the family man, over the ascetic who renounced all worldly goods according to Gandhiji a man should not crave for results of his actions, but should nonetheless act in a spirit of dedication.<sup>4</sup>

#### Artha

Gandhi's ideology of Swaraj and trusteeship was an amalgam of the twin concepts of Dharma and Karma. He rejected class antagonism and favored class-coexistence and harmony as necessary to social dynamic. Producers should share with the workers the wealth produced by joint enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

As an abstract we can conclude that for Gandhi morality and humanity is the trust of all religions, Gandhiji imbibed a secular faith in the need for the enforcement of a moral imperative based on man's own consciences and Sanskara.

**References –**

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