Gandhian Concept of *Ram Rajya*: The Utopian State

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ABSTRACT

Politics is the last refuge of scoundrels is too blunt but today at times seems true. The onus of establishing the Ram Rajya truly and honestly lies on our politicians. But sadly there is difference between their words and actions. Ram Rajya simply means an *adarsh rajya* or principled rule and is not the rule of a Hindu king or Hindu elite but of all and for all. Gandhiji had a message hidden in it for all the political parties who today have forgot to keep themselves available to those who have chosen them to rule. Ram Rajya conveys a sense of duty on those sitting at the helm of public institutions to set the highest of moral and ethical values. The present paper aims to present this concept of Gandhiji in the fond hope that one day it will prick the conscience of our incorrigible politicians.

*Keywords*: Politics, Ram Rajya, Gandhiji, Ethical Value

By whichever name we pray, worship or call God, but for Mahatma Gandhi they are all the same. Gandhiji’s concept of Ram-Rajya represents not the Hindu rule but a principled rule, where rules and regulations are paramount and justice prevails for everyone irrespective of caste and creed. Whether Gandhi invoked the correct image of Ram-Rajya may be disputable but one thing is certain that Mahatma Gandhi never had any narrow connotations about this concept. In fact there is a gap between what Gandhi meant and what it meant to the receiver.

All meanings in our life are governed by the context in which these are asserted. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had a fear of ghosts and spirits in his child age and when it intensified an old servant of the family, asked him to chant *Ramayana* to overcome this fear. Out of sheer faith and in order to overcome his fear of ghosts and spirits, this remedy proved a boon for him. Thus the phenomena turned esoteric to Gandhi and *Ramayana* a way of working towards self-realization. He never enforced the Hindu ideology through his chanting rather only carved a way for himself. That is what it all means by the Ram Rajya concept too.

This practice of undertaking an inward journey by Gandhi helped him a lot to frame his politics and his concept of the ideal state or *raja*. Gandhiji never wanted to establish a Hindu Raj in the country rather he simply meant to set up a Divine Raj. He was not bothered about the person called Rama, but Rama’s ancient and ideal state which was a true democracy in which even the meanest of citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. That’s what Ram Rajya for Gandhi meant and it did not die even with the death of Gandhi.
As per our traditions, Ram-Rajya began when Lord Ram returned from the fourteen year exile and crowned as the king of Ayodhya. Ram-Rajya brought lord Ram into direct contact with ordinary people and their life. He established a strong connection of concern and understanding between himself and the people. This is the key element in the whole concept of Ram-Rajya as was envisioned by Gandhiji. The Civil Disobedience movement, the Dandi March, Non-co-operation movement could not be what they were – campaigns which riveted people scattered all over India - if the satyagrahis had been rushing through villages and towns in either motorized vehicles or bullock carts or bicycles, it was simply because Gandhiji was in direct contact with the masses. Being in close contact with the people whose toil and dreams Gandhi sought to understand and empathize created a Ram Rajya like situation for Gandhiji. There is much more hidden in these mass movements.

To remain with the masses without any differentiation of caste and creed or high or low also worked for Vinoba Bhave in his Sarvodaya movement. In the First Five-Year Plan, the central government invited Bhave to come to Delhi and participate in the deliberations. He agreed to participate but walked to Delhi from Wardha, instead of taking an airplane or train, just to make the masses feel that he is with them. His humbleness and contacts with the masses inspired a few landowners who willingly gave up a part of their large land holdings to the landless and thus the Ram Rajya was born.

The life of Gandhiji was simple yet so meaningful and will help us to understand the essence of Gandhi’s interest in Ram Rajya – which meant adarsh rajya or principled rule. It is not the rule of a Hindu king or Hindu elite but of all and for all. There is a message hidden in it for all the political parties who have really forgotten to keep themselves available to those who have chosen them to rule. Ram Rajya conveys a sense of duty on those sitting at the helm of public institutions to set the highest of moral and ethical values. Only then a political Utopia will prevail.

REFERENCES