

## **Mahatma Gandhi's lessons on tolerance**

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A whole book can be written on how Gandhiji's ideas are relevant today. He was a visionary and possessed a very powerful mind and hence thought deeply and wrote on basic human issues and problems facing India in those times. Those issues are as relevant today as were in his time.

I will touch on the area of intolerance which is dividing our society and tearing into our social fabric and show how Gandhiji's teachings can help us.

Gandhiji was a compromiser par excellence. He would always consider other party's point of view and come up with solutions acceptable to all parties. Both in his legal and political work he brought in parties together for resolution of their problems.

Ability to compromise comes only when we are very tolerant to other's point of view and do not impose unilaterally majority's point of view. This ability comes to an individual when he is secure in the knowledge that the compromise solution leads towards general good for all the people.

Gandhiji who was fearless and hence a very secure human being always had the general good of all Indians in his mind whenever he offered solutions to knotty problems. Devoid of any personal ego issues and always looking for long-term solutions, he appealed to warring parties to keep in sight the higher purpose of life and achieved great success. Since he practiced what he preached, his message had a great effect and achieved the desired results.

Today we see all around us intolerance and catering to special interest groups which is resulting in bans on various things and creating social tensions. This is an outcome of fear in the ruling politicians that if they do not do so they will not be elected - little realizing that if they keep on working for the general good of their constituency they will be elected easily and with much bigger margins.

Fear comes [from insecurity and is an outcome of a brain which cannot resolve the issues after taking into account all eventualities](#). This inability to evaluate all outcomes transcends caste, creed, or economic situations. Thus most of the people no matter whether they are rich or poor suffer from insecurities – for poor it is the insecurity of their future and for rich on how to increase their wealth and keep it safe. It is the removal of these insecurities by a powerful brain that can rid us of fear. Yoga helps in developing such a brain through meditation and focus on a [single thought for a long time – called \*Sanyam\* by Patanjali](#).

Another way to get rid of fear is to be thankful for whatever we have and count our blessings. If we do that continuously then it gives us a sense of contentment and happiness since our burdens and insecurities are reduced by the thought that somebody will be there to help us and everything will be O.K. This also has the ability to sublimate the greed impulse.

I also feel that the fear of [missing out and the insecurity of what will happen in future is what produces greed](#) and in turn corruption and corrupt politicians. These corrupt politicians then become egotist and intolerant and hijack the agenda of India's democracy for their selfish reasons.

Gandhiji practiced both these things in his life - his regular and daily meditations and his deep belief in God and higher forces to whom he was grateful for everything that he achieved. This helped him in becoming completely fearless.

Devoid of fear he was able to chart new paths in tolerance, taking everybody's opinion and carrying all the people together for giving us independence and making this nation better.

So on this solemn Gandhi Jayanti day let us remember and put in practice the teachings of Gandhiji so that we become a tolerant and happy society. This will help in making a better India.

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