

# **THE GITA AND SATYAGRAHA**

**-M.K. GANDHI**

## **LETTER FROM TOLSTOY TO GANDHI**

- Tolstoy is expressing his opinion about passive resistance or non-resistance. According to him passive resistance is nothing but the law of love. The union of human souls is the highest and only law of human life. Love is the supreme and unique law of human life, which everyone feels in the depth of one's soul. We find it manifested most clearly in the soul of the infants. But the false teachings of the world confuse them. This law was proclaimed by all philosophies- Indian, Chinese, Hebrew, Greek and Roman. It is most clearly expressed by Christ who warned against its corruption for it is most likely while living in worldly interests. Violence is incompatible with love, so once violence is started, the law of love will come to an end. The Christian civilization consciously or unconsciously grew by denying this law of love and by following force or violence.
- As force entered the existence of love came to an end, there was only violence, the power of the strongest. It was thus that Christian society has lived during these nineteenth centuries. It is a fact that all time people were following violence in the organisation of society. Christians professed the law of love but practically instead of love they took the weapon of violence which created a contradiction between what they profess and what they do. The time has arrived to question which to allow the violence to rule or to abolish all violence in the form of taxes, court and police establishments and chiefly the army.
- Tolstoy has mentioned a real incident about a girl's high school in Moscow. The teacher and the bishop were examining the girls. They questioned on the commandments especially on the sixth. After that they asked another question whether killing is always a crime. The girls answered no as they were thought to say like that. They said murder was permitted in war and in execution of criminals. But only one girl among them answered 'always'. She said with firm confidence that not only murder, any kind of wrong is forbidden by Christ. The Bishop became silent and the girl came out victorious.
- With time different thoughts such as Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, unemployment, poverty, criminal activities are increasing day by day. All of these can be cured only by the law of love. If the law of love is acknowledged and violence is denied, then these problems can be solved. Tolstoy says that Gandhi's activity in the Transvaal is the most important one in the world where all nations should take part.
- In Russia a small group of people were developing the idea of passive resistance and they refused to serve in the army. They believed that God is more powerful than man. Christianity has been presented contradictorily by professing love on one side and by acknowledging armies. This contradiction would bring about annihilation sooner or later either of Christianity or the armies that it helps to maintain for power. This contradiction

felt by all governments makes it necessary for them to choose whether they would embrace love or life or death.

(In this letter we have seen that the way Gandhi was leading the freedom movement by acknowledging a few divine virtues such as non-resistance, non-violence, love etc were supported by Tolstoy. So he is appreciating Gandhi's efforts to bring the freedom to his nation following the law of love. He has shown how double faced the Western world is as on one side they profess the Christianity and on the other they follow violence to be powerful. Tolstoy is optimistic about the law of love that it will diminish the duplicity in the Western world.)