



Mains Practice Question

Q. What are Mahatma Gandhi's Eleven Vows and what is their significance in today's society? (150 words)

24 Oct, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Mahatma Gandhi gave the eleven vows for spiritual and moral upliftment of the inmates of Sabarmati Ashram, but these vows served as important principles for the benefit of the entire society.

The Eleven Vows are:

- **Satya-Truth:** '*Sachhidananda*' [Sat(being)+Chit (true knowledge)+Anand (bliss)] is one of the epithets of the Supreme Being. Observance of Truth was expected not only in speech but also in thought and in action.
- **Ahimsa-Nonviolence:** Ahimsa is the path along which one reaches truth. It not only means forbearing from physical violence but also removing all hatred, jealousy, and desire to harm others.
- **Brahmacharya-Celibacy:** It really means 'moving towards, Brahma' that is, towards truth. For such a person, a control over all senses is necessary.
- **Asteya-Non-stealing:** A person should use limited resources and should not deprive others of basic necessities.
- **Aparigraha or Asangraha - Non-possession:** A person should lead such a simple life that he takes for himself from society only his minimum requirements.
- **Sharira-Shrama - Physical labour or Bread Labour:** His concept of shrama-yagna suggested that everyone should perform some kind of physical labour in the spirit of oneness with the poor.
- **Asvada-Control of Palate:** It is a part of sadhana of the pilgrim to 'truth' with the conviction that food is meant only to sustain the body and for service of others.
- **Abhaya-Fearlessness:** In order to realise the truth, it is necessary to remove all fear.
- **Sarva-Dharma-Samanatva- Equal respect for all Religions:** Quest of truth being the moving spirit behind all religions. So, one should never consider one's own religion to be the only perfect religion.
- **Swadeshi-Duty towards the neighbour:** Gandhiji insisted to serve the immediate neighbour or indigenous goods in the spirit of love.
- **Asprishyatanivarana - Removal of Untouchability:** Gandhi's vision was to wipe out untouchability and to uplift the depressed and the downtrodden people.

Significance in today's society

- Adherence to **truthfulness** is necessary for maintaining **personal uprightness** and **professional integrity**.
- The philosophy of **Asangraha or non-possession** can help address the **rising consumerism, environmental unsustainability and inequality globally**.
- Concept of **bread labour** has been effectively utilized in the **Swachh Bharat Mission** to bring behavioural change among citizens.
- **Abhaya or fearlessness** is needed to raise **inquisitiveness among young minds** of the nation so as to express their freedom of speech and expression and raise dissenting voices upholding the true meaning of democracy.
- **Ahimsa or Non-violence** is the only solution to **global peace and prosperity** when the world is

facing the problems of ethnic conflicts, terrorism, war, etc.

Hence, Gandhian principles continue to serve as a harbinger of peace and social solidarity in the society today.

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