
Civil Disobedience: Martin Luther King Jr. And Nelson Mandela

Civil Disobedience, also called passive resistance, has its meaning on refusing the to obey the law in a nonviolent act. It was first used by Henry David Thoreau. His ideology was based on disobedience. He believed people can change things by disobeying because it was an act that does not need violence. Henry David Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817, in Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau went to Harvard University. According to "Biography.com" "He graduated from college in 1837 and struggled with what do to next" (par 3). According to some reports, Thoreau had to take a break from his schooling for a time because of illness. At the time, an educated man like Thoreau probably will start a career in Engineering or Medicine. However, he decides to set up a school in 1838. His School collapsed a few years later after his brother became ill. Thoreau then went to work with his father for a time. He began writing nature poetry in the 1840s, with poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, his friend. He is one of America's most famous writers, Henry David Thoreau is remembered for his philosophical writings and his desire of disobedience. The two major issues being debated in the United States during Thoreau's life were slavery and the Mexican-American War. Both issues play an important part in Thoreau's essay. He wrote "Civil Disobedience" as a protest against injustice. He practiced Civil Disobedience by not paying taxes. Thoreau refused to pay taxes to an unjust government that supported slavery and was fighting an unjust war. This form of protest inspired leaders for generations. Civil disobedience is an active form of nonviolent protest. Those who practice civil disobedience are strong people who believe in justice.

Thoreau begins his essay by arguing that the government hardly proves itself useful and that it derives its power from the majority because they are the strongest group, not because they justify their viewpoint. He contends that people's first obligation is to do what they believe is right and not to follow the law the majority follow. Thoreau further argues that the United States government is unjust because it supports slavery and an aggressive war. He argued that voting sometimes does not change anything, and he asserts that actions are the real change. Although Thoreau asserts that a man cannot eradicate the government issues, he argued that at least a man should not be guilty through compliance. He made reference to how in some point, citizens serve the government in one way or another. Thoreau uses the word serve suggesting that people have a lack of freedom, and the word machine suggesting a lack of control. If a man lack of control, he tends to serve the majority decisions and many times that includes the unjust actions of the State. Even when men consider themselves free men or against war and slavery, they serve the government and do not even know it. Thoreau presents his own experiences as a model of the unjust government by describing his experience in the Concord jail after refusing to pay the taxes for six years. He declares that he cannot allow himself to recognize a government that supports slavery and unjust war. In the essay, Thoreau introduces the right of revolution. He describes the American Revolution and how the colonist refused to obey the laws of a corrupt British government, and how they broke those laws and declared their independence. Thoreau ends by making a reminder that the government must recognize individuals as the most important power in society. He also points out that the government should always have the consent of each individual in the important decisions. He believes that this is the key to create a glorious state that treats all men justly and with respect.

Mohandas K. Gandhi, most known as Mahatma Gandhi, the great soul was an Indian Lawyer born in Hindu. He was influenced by his mother, a religious woman. She taught him that every person matter and people must respect others' lives. While living in South Africa, Gandhi experienced discrimination against all people of color. When he was traveling on a train where the police made him sit in a third-class section even though he had purchased a first-class ticket, Gandhi refused, and he was forced off the train. This event changed his life. Gandhi started to refuse to obey laws that made him get arrested. However, he did not stop in his ideology of disobeying what it is wrong. He went to jail many times and while in jail he read the essay "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau. Gandhi used the term civil disobedience to describe his non-violently strategy. His strategies include negotiations, sacrifice, non-violence, selflessness, and cooperation. He believes that people should be brave and not cowards. Gandhi was decided to change the Indian's lives. He fought against the injustice of a government that did not respect the civil rights of Indians. He organized the Indians and asked them to fight with a nonviolent resisting war. His goal was to stand in protest and used his body and words to made the government listen. In 1930 Gandhi organized a revolution against the British, the Salt March. The Salt March was the most symbolic act of Gandhi's life. His protest helped India to become independent on August 15, 1947. Gandhi drew a nonviolent change. This inspired Civil Rights Movements in the United States of America with Martin Luther King Jr. and it inspired Nelson Mandela's leadership.

The Civil Rights Movement came out of the need and desire for freedom and equality. Thoreau and Gandhi were a big inspiration for many people, especially for Martin Luther King Jr. He was one of the most famous advocates for nonviolent change. Martin Luther King Jr. Had exceptional oratorical skills and that helped him to draw attention. He influenced people to protest against discrimination acts and to demand their civil rights. Even though he influenced people to protest, all his actions were nonviolent. He believed in nonviolent protests as well as Gandhi. His leadership was important to a successful end with the segregation of African Americans in the south. Martin Luther King worked hard in his desire to provide black people the right to vote and he succeeds. During the march on Washington, D.C, his message moved many supporters from all parts of society. Martin Luther King delivered his most famous speech called "I Have a Dream." In this speech, he argued that he had the dream of one day the nation will live inequality. The speech called for freedom and equality not only for black people but for all people. In 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize. He is an icon of the Civil Rights Movement.

Human rights are a very important part of every individual. Human rights protect vulnerable people from abuse. If someone abuses their power against our rights, we stand up and protect them. Thoreau introduced the Civil disobedience as an act of protest against the unjust laws of a government. However, this act can be used in many ways. For example, Gandhi used to gain the independence of his country. Martin Luther King Jr. used it to protest and gain freedom and equality. In my opinion, civil disobedience is a right each individual has. Everybody has the right to protest and protect their rights. In Thoreau's ideology, each person is responsible for their own critical thinking. Thoreau states, "The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right" (5). He believed each person should do what they think, especially if the decision they are making is about an important event. This might sometimes imply disobeying the law. Sometimes disobeying is necessary. Martin Luther King Jr. asserts, "One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." He means that is our responsibility to stop unfairness. I agree with disobeying the law if this act will make a change for better in our society of course. Nowadays, many people practice disobedience in many aspects of life. For

example, in 2018, Sally Yates refused to defend President Trump's travel ban. She defended the justice even though she knew this will have consequences. She was fired, but afterward, she became an idol of disobedience. Probably her disobedience did not have a big impact, but she did what she thought was right. People use disobedience all the time, however, almost always these acts end up in violence. Many times, the government force people to stop protesting. It is important to emphasize that Civil Disobedience started as a desire for protest without implying in violent acts. I want to end by remembering this quote from Mahatma Gandhi. He says, "First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win." We should never give up on fairness.

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