

Abhiraam Venigalla

Ms. Small

10 November 2025

Advanced Humanities

Equality and Logic: How Gandhi Made His Case for Independence

During the 1900s, India was under severe control and racial oppression by British rule due to the taxation of an essential resource, salt. Indian citizens were enraged by this taxation that they organized a Salt March to protest peacefully against taxation of salt to eventually gain independence. The leader of the Salt March was Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi, a non-violent leader who prioritized non-violent movements over violent attacks to gain independence. However, convincing through non-violent tactics requires the use of rhetorical strategies to provoke thought and action in his audience. In his letter to Viceroy Lord Irwin, the representative of the British crown in India, Gandhi appeals to pathos by referring to the equal love he has for both British and Indian citizens to emphasize equality among all, while appealing to logos by communicating his logic through repeated conditional statements to explore the benefits of Indian independence and ultimately persuade Lord Irwin.

By appealing to pathos, Gandhi delivers his message of equality while describing the suffering conditions of impoverished Indians to evoke sympathy in Lord Irwin to take further action. During a time of severe racial oppression against Indians, Gandhi still kept his composure, saying that “if I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden” (Gandhi 3). Gandhi is saying that he loves the British as much as he loves his own family, even during severe oppression. In doing so, he is avoiding an aggressive tone in his essay by communicating to Lord Irwin that they are on the same side. In doing so, Gandhi is trying to

emphasize the idea of shared humanity, where everyone, despite their social class, deserves equal rights. Furthermore, Gandhi is saying that if he loves the British even after what they have done to him, the British should have the same love for the Indians. While Gandhi delivers his message, he points out how the British still don't give the same love to impoverished Indians as Gandhi does to the British, writing that the imposition of the Salt Tax is "the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the independence is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil" (Gandhi 4). Gandhi talks about the suffering conditions of the impoverished in India and the tax's effects on them. In doing so, Gandhi evokes sympathy for the impoverished Indians. He doesn't just directly talk about the negatives of the tax; instead, he talks about the negatives from the poor man's standpoint. Therefore, Gandhi doesn't just get his point across, but his point sticks with Lord Irwin, causing him to feel bad about imposing the tax and impelling him to take future action.

In addition to expressing his emotions, by appealing to logos, Gandhi effectively communicates his logic through repeated condition statements to persuade Lord Irwin to take action. Gandhi establishes a common ground between him and Lord Irwin by saying, "when they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence" (Gandhi 4). Gandhi is saying that if the evils, the British colonization of India, is removed, then obstacles with British land in India and the promotion of the common good will be removed. By appealing to logos, he appeals to both sides by introducing a win-win scenario. If the British grants independence to India, then the British will free the stress upon their land and also grant India freedom. This tactic, in turn helps persuade Lord Irwin to take action,

emphasizing the benefits both Indians and the British will have, serving as an effective persuasive tactic for Lord Irwin.

Through appealing to pathos by referring to the idea of equality among all and appealing to logos by communicating his logic, Gandhi effectively evokes sympathy and persuades Lord Irwin to take action and grant India freedom from British colonization. Even though the British ignored his letter, through rhetorical strategies, Gandhi effectively and non-violently communicated his ideas opened more doors for Indian independence and helped in his journey of gaining independence for India.