

GANDHIAN CONCEPT OF MAN

Dissertation

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of M. Phil Degree

BY

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C E R T I F I C A T E.

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled " Gandhian Concept of Man " submitted by Shri Ranjit Kr. Deb. in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy is a bonafide study to the best of my knowledge. All the quotations, extracts and ideas of other studies have been duly documented.

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P R E F A C E

The world is now passing through a new phase of humanism. It focuses attention on man and the values of his life. Man now wants to be something more than human i.e., more fully himself than the traditional moulds and cultural props let him be. Democracy is considered as the ideal since it holds vox populi as the vox dei and since, consequently, it provides for the fullest possible development of the personality through preservation of the human values like freedom, creativity, equality and dignity of the individual. Man is thus the measure of things, in a way. In the words of Martin Buber, 'Man is the source of all surprise in the universe'. He is the wonder of all wonders. Sophocles said : "Wonders are many, but none there is so strange, so full as the child of man"¹.

Yet, man has always remained an enigma to himself. Eversince he has attained consciousness, man has been ceaselessly trying to know not only his universe, but also himself, both as a subject and as an object. But human life still remains a mystery, a riddle with many unanswered questions. The unpredictability of human nature is, however, a pointer to its uniqueness.

In the process of evolution, man emerges as a distinct species with qualities which are different not only in degree but also in kind. And these unique qualities, pertaining not only to his physique but also to his head and heart -- which have made him a unique being. It is believed that new qualities emerge when lower forms of life evolve into more complex and advanced ones, and that the new qualities which are manifest at successive stages move in the direction of more consciousness, more freedom, and greater capacity for love². Man, nevertheless, keeps continuity with lower forms of life, yet possesses characteristics not found at the lower levels, His is, thus, not merely a 'human animality' -- a homo sapiens.

Man is a self-reflecting being with a special capacity of reflecting both upon himself and his experiences. Rationality distinguishes man from other animals, which quality makes him essentially and fundamentally a progressive being. Riehl believes in man's descent from the animal, nevertheless holds that man has now reached a stage where he must look above and not below. He not only stands erect but must continue to do so only if his look is upward. God is the goal towards which man must strive if he is to retain his present stature³.

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The modern age is characterised with inner emptiness, loneliness and anxiety. No doubt there is progress in science and technology offering high promises for man, but in other areas, including the ethical and non-material, there is widespread confusion and disintegration⁴. Man's experience of emptiness comes from his feeling that he is powerless to do anything effective about his life and the world he lives in. Loneliness comes from his feeling of being kept on the outside, isolated or alienated. In anxiety, man is threatened, without knowing what steps he should take in meeting the dangerous situation and he feels being "caught" and "overwhelmed"⁵. Thus, in the midst of endless scientific and technological achievements, man in the modern age is losing the substance of human life⁶.

Scientific conception of man suffers from oversimplification and limited vision of the human nature. It conceives of man merely as a by product of nature. According to it, the life of man, this his precarious existence in this planet, is all. He is a matter, pure and simple, or a beast in disguise, his seeming rationality and morality being only bubbles in the ocean of bestiality. Sorokin summarizes the findings of contemporary science on the question of man as follows :

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"Man is a variety of electron-proton complex; or an animal closely related to the ape or monkey; or a reflex mechanism; or a variety of stimulus-response relationship; or a psychoanalytical bag filled either by libido or basic physiological drives; or a mechanism controlled mainly by digestive and economic needs"⁷.

Evidently scientific explanation of man ignores his higher needs, his feeling and aesthetic aspect, his moral and spiritual ^{aspirations} by dint of which he makes his mark as a unique being.

Thus there is the need for a proper concept of man with due regard to his nature, dignity and destiny. Man cannot attain either individual or social progress till he knows clearly the nature of his own self and determines his rightful place in the vastness of the universe. The matter of self-regard is a primary drive behind all human actions. Nobody changes his habits of thinking, feeling or acting until something happens to change his own picture or concept of himself. Thus to assign to man a lower status is to demoralize and degrade him and to make society no better than Hobbes's 'state of nature'. Kimbal young found Darwin's theory serving only to 'overstress open conflict for survival'⁸. But to make man aware of his inherent divinity, his higher origin and destiny is to pave path for a better future for him -- the kingdom of God on earth.

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Gandhi had a very noble conception of man. He said that man must never despair of human nature⁹. His strong sense of human dignity made him a rebel 'from the early days of his life, made him refuse to cheat in the class room. It was in order to restore the dignity and worth of man that he launched a life-long struggle, first in South Africa later on in India, gave an undaunted fight to remove the inhuman practice of untouchability, and stood up against the use of machines that dehumanize man and reduce his sense of self-respect and cripple him¹⁰. While speaking of Gandhi's humanism, Ralph Bunche, in a seminar in 1953, emphasized that Gandhi was a true internationalist and a true servant of humanity. And this was revealed (a) in his unyielding opposition to violence and war and his demonstration that problems of human relations and conflicts can be solved by non-violent and peaceful means; (b) in his compassion for mankind, (c) in his devotion to the elimination of human suppression and misery; (d) in his eschewing of hatred as an instrument of policy even to attain a coveted goal and (e) in his struggle for freedom for the individual and for peoples¹¹.

Gandhi's humanism is unique in being rooted in his spiritual realization that all life is one and that men are but manifestations of the same reality called 'God' Self or 'Truth'. He believed 'in the absolute oneness of God therefore also of humanity.¹² For him,

*the different races of mankind are like different branches of a tree. Once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the basic unity of human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition¹³.

I have not attempted any comparative study of the different concepts of man that appeared in the course of history, except some incidental references to one or two that have been made in the course of the discussion of the main theme. Besides, I have concentrated upon three major concepts in Gandhi's philosophy -- 'purity of Means', 'Ramarajya' and 'Education' -- and have tried to see their bearing upon an understanding of Gandhi's 'man'.

I am indebted to my supervisor Dr. Harsh Narain (Reader), whose scholarship and active guidance made me feel at ease in my work, also

(vii)

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C H A P T E R : O N EI N T R O D U C T I O N(i) General Introduction to Gandhian Outlook.

Gandhi was not an academic philosopher. Yet in the depth of his writings and speeches, beliefs and actions, one will not fail to find a consistent world view or philosophy of life. If "philosophy" means mere theorizing, and arm-chair speculation, Gandhi had none of the kind. Like the ancient Indian philosophers, he was averse to the discussion of any problem which had no practical bearing on life. But if "philosophy" means a comprehensive understanding of the deepest problems, aims and purposes of life, the evaluation of the essential principles that govern life and their organization and practical application in both individual and social spheres, then Gandhi was undoubtedly a philosopher. The distinctive features of Gandhian philosophy are :

Firstly, Gandhi's philosophy shows a decisive preference for simplicity as against complexity. His conceptions of the Universe, God, Nature, man etc., are all characterised by singular directness and absence of intricacy. Unlike sociologists and psychologists, he believed that human nature is not complicated. For him, individuals and nations are not perpetually self-divided entities doomed to be at war with themselves.

The tensions of the modern world are the outcome of a craving for complexity, and the besetting sin of science is that it mistakes this complexity for progress. And Gandhi, like the ancient stoics, Rousseau and others, had a high preference for the 'life in accordance with nature'.

Secondly, Gandhi's thought is marked by a firm conviction that reality is not merely a natural order but a moral order as well. For him, real thought must be organically connected to moral purposes on the one hand, and useful and right action on the other¹. There is no hiatus between what is right and what is useful or profitable, and his entire philosophy was permeated by moral imperatives. Like Kant, he laid strong emphasis on freedom as a postulate of morality. Yet, unlike Kant, Gandhi did not offer a logical or metaphysical foundation for his belief in the freedom of the will. He was content if his concept of freedom could be concretized in terms of the primacy of means and enriched in terms of love and non-resistance².

Gandhi's is thus an action-philosophy, representing a unity between thought and action. He was a champion of the purity of means. He held that from moral points of view means are not only as important as, but often more important than ends, granting, at the same

time, that ends should be good and reasonable, If the means are pure (i.e., if they conform to the tests of truth and non-violence), even mistakes, errors and failures aid the growth of the individual. But wrong means corrupt the soul and no good can ever come out of them.

All of Gandhi's thoughts and activities were guided by the principle of complete unity and integrity of body, mind and soul in the individual human being -- the body controlled by the mind and the mind by the soul. But this control is not to be achieved by despising or neglecting either the body or the mind or in the mystic exaltation of the soul by itself. He attached to physical health and well-being as much importance as to plain and logical thinking or moral responsibility.

Again, reality is regarded by Gandhi as spiritual, which supplements his idea of reality as a moral order. The quest for Good holds meaning only for the spirit. Thus, the autonomy of the human individual is assigned high worth, society is regarded as a community of souls rather than of biologically impelled organisms, ethical demands are directed to the 'conscience', and humanism is transformed from an abstract love of Humanity in general to love of actual living beings regarded as spirits³.

Besides, faith in God was the starting-point of Gandhi's philosophy of life. Though as a person

having faith in some source of spiritual life, superior to the material universe, Gandhi believed in God, he was more inclined to think of Him as the Upanishadic Brahman. He never defined God, and allowed every person to have his own idea of God. He had no objection even to a formal profession of agnosticism, so long as the agnostic demonstrated by his attachment to moral values that his outlook was essentially spiritual in essence. In this sense, Gandhi's system cannot be called religious in the ordinary sense of the term. He did not have one particular belief derived from any organized religion as a guideline. He reduced all religions to the level of ethics and morals. He saw God as Truth; and truth and ethics are common to all religions. His system is thus normative and is opposed to all positivist theories which are value-neutral.

Gandhi's greatest achievement is the spiritualization of politics. He had interest in spirituality, not as an abstract virtue, but as something that accompanies every thought and action and is tested in the service of others. For him, no society, state or any other institution has any worth apart from its contribution to the moral and spiritual growth of the individuals of which it is composed. And Gandhi judged the value and vitality of social institutions by their capacity to foster such growth⁴. Gandhian concepts are neither the product of

theoretical empiricism (since based on experiments with truth), nor derived from a particular context. They are both relative and correlative and not absolute. Even God or Truth was not absolute for Gandhi, since he found many gaps or contradictions between the ~~unknown~~ truth and the unknown truth. This makes Gandhian system dialectical in a special sense. Gandhian dialectics (as different from both Hegelian and Marxian dialectics) move from the absolute (God or Truth), taken as an axiom, indefinable, to the relative, which fully covers man's total life and is reflected in the great struggle of filling the gap between the absolute and the relative by constantly moving ^{towards} to the latter⁵./ Lastly, Gandhi's unshakable faith in the moral progress of man led him to discover that for any problem of life there is always an alternative, a morally alternative solution.

(ii) Roots of Gandhi's Thought.

Gandhi, often described as the efflorescence of Hindu tradition and culture, demonstrated by leading his life according to the Hindu ideas and ideals, that the teachings of the Vedas, Upanisads and Gita are not abstract precepts, but are working principles of day-to-day life and action of man⁶.

Radhakrishnan saw in Gandhi the qualities we regard as characteristic of India, i.e., characteristic of India at its inspired best⁷. Yet there were other factors that contributed in shaping Gandhi's view of life. His firm faith in the Upanisadic ideas about God, self and the world, and his rational adoption of the Upanisadic ideal of life with proper adjustments to modern conditions made Gandhi a product of the ancient Indian culture; but at the same time he assimilated in his life the best elements from the culture of the occident⁸. Some of the influencing factors are :

Buddhism :

Gandhi, like Buddha, wanted to evolve a new social order in consonance with the dignity and moral demands of men. His ethics of non-violence was directly influenced by Buddhism, although from a broader point of view it may be seen as an amalgam of Hindu, Buddha, Jaina and Christian moral teachings.

Gandhi not only endorsed the Buddhist eight-fold path as means to salvation but also embraced Buddha's cosmic view of salvation according to which an individual can attain salvation only by taking the whole world with him. Besides he, like Buddha, believed in Karma and rebirth and wanted to take births and rebirths, in order

to serve people and help them in their salvation. Man inherits the results of his actions in past lives. He is also the heir to the past of the human race. Thus, according to both, men are not born equal but the inequalities are individual and have no necessary relation with race or caste, creed or place of birth, or colour of skin. Every man has value and is due both to give and to receive justice, mercy and kindness. No individual or group has any right to dominate or exploit other human beings. Racial segregation and discrimination are evil. For Gandhi, as for Buddha, there is no such thing as original sin. In the country, man's nature, is originally pure and later became polluted by evil association. Again, both believed in the infinite potentialities of man. It is false to say that human nature will not change although it may not necessarily change overnight. The story of the brigand Angulimala's becoming an Arahant shows that no man is beyond redemption, beyond the pale of human fellowship. Of course, perfection is not already present within us, but the seeds are there which, will grow and blossom if requisite effort is put forth and the conditions are favourable. Men must be given every opportunity for their fullest development, Their gain is the gain of all mankind.

Bhagavadgita :

Gandhi's philosophy of life is the philosophy of action. He was himself a Karmayogin. The true test

of a man's worth is his action. And for him, the Gita contained all the truths and light for a Karmayogi. Gandhi derived guidance and utmost peace from the scripture when he was beset^{^e} with problems of life⁹. According to Gandhi, the central message of the Gita is the message of selfless action or 'anasaktiyoga' as he called it. Actions must be done without any attachment for the fruits thereof. And Gandhi was of opinion that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of non-violence in every shape and form. Hence, for him, the Gita teaches non-violence through its doctrine of Niskama Karma. One who is violent, passionate, sensual and selfish cannot ever renounce the possessions¹⁰. The holy war described in the scripture ~~is~~ cannot be called a violent war. Those actions are violent which are done with passions, anger, hatred and selfishness. It is not possible to kill one's brother after having killed all one's passions.

Gandhi, did not consider Kurukshetra to be a historical event, but an allegorical description of a kind of duel perpetually going on in the human hearts. Physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring¹¹. It merely emphasizes that war, if at all, must be waged only for the performance of duty.

Again, the Gita teaches not inaction, but egoless action as the way to self-realization. Renunciation of results of action does not mean that one should ignore the results or remain ignorant of it. Man must know the effects of his actions, his capacity for doing a particular work and the means that he employs. But he should not be engrossed with the thoughts of enjoyment and fulfilment of his sensual cravings or material success. He should curb his passions and develop the sense of renunciation towards worldly ambitions and gains.

Besides, Gandhi distinguished religion from the mode of worship and equated ^{it} with morality. Real religion is something that has to be lived and practised not only in seclusion but also in the larger activities of the community. People wrongly hold that in business, vocation, politics and day-to-day work, religion has no place and that it is ^{^ meant} only for attaining spiritual salvation. Gandhi followed the path charted by the author of the Gita who has drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits, rather has shown that religion must rule even our worldly pursuits. What cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion¹².

Christianity :

In spite of his Hindu moorings, Gandhi was deeply impressed by Christianity, particularly the Sermon

On the Mount, which he read being propelled by Tolstoy's writings. His 'non-violence' and universal 'love' owe much to this exalted scripture. For him, the spirit^{^i} of tolerance, the piety of motive, the spirit of detachment, and resistance to evil are the maxims of both the Gita and the Sermon. What the Sermon described in a graphic manner, the Bhagavadgita reduced to a scientific formula¹³.

But Gandhi was no blind follower of the Christian ideals. He found that much of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount¹³. He had an immeasurable reverence for Jesus, but many aspects of Christianity left him discontented. It is said that Gandhi embraced Christ but rejected Christianity. Dr. Stanley Jones said of Gandhi :

"One of the most Christ-like men in history was not called a Christian at all"¹⁴.

Firstly, Gandhi rejected the Christian view that sin is inherent in human nature. For him, man is originally good and divine. His essence is the spirit which is beyond all sin.

Secondly, Gandhi did not believe that Christ redeemed the sinful acts of man. The inexorable law of Karma makes everyone suffer the consequence of his action. Besides, from moral point of view it is better to suffer the consequences of one's own sin than wish for redemption from it by God¹⁵.

Thirdly, Gandhi also declined to accept that Jesus was the only incarnation of God. For him Kṛṣṇa, Rama, Mohammed and Zoroaster were equally incarnated divine persons. Again, Jesus cannot be the only son of God (i.e. God is his exclusive father). In the literal sense God cannot be the Father of Christ, as He did not marry like human beings. If it is taken in the metaphorical sense, then God is the Father of all creatures living on earth why of Jesus alone¹⁶?

Similarly, it was hard for Gandhi to accept that Jesus was the most perfect man born on earth, and the only ideal and divine teacher. We know of many other great souls no less inferior to him, and Hinduism has hundreds of illustrious examples. Gandhi also did not accept Christianity to be the most perfect religion. As the vision of Truth has to be received in the imperfect vessel of mind, all religions are imperfect to a more or less extent. Thus there is no religion that is absolutely perfect and final. As a religion, therefore, Christianity has the same status as Islam or Zoroastrianism or Judaism¹⁷.

Gandhi's criticism of Christianity, however, does not minimise the influence of Christianity on him. Jones remarked quite aptly :

"He was a Hindu who was deeply Christian, He was fundamentally a Hindu. The roots of his spiritual life were not in Christ - they were in the Bhagavadgita. And yet in spite of himself, and in spite of his constant protests against the Christian faith as represented in the missionary movement in India, he was more Christianized than most Christians"¹⁸.

Gandhi's faith in the highest value of renunciation that he absorbed from the Gita and Buddhism was deepened as a result of his study of the 'Sermon on the Mount'. Although he found nothing new in it, it at least made his own inner ideal still clearer and brighter. He linked the Sermon with the precepts which he had received as a Vaishnava from his mother in his childhood. Yet, Christ's words were a living inspiration and a spiritual power for him. Gandhi interpreted the Cross as the symbol of sacrifice for Truth, and his Saty^agraha is an adaptation of the Christian Weapon for Truth and Justice in the individual and in the society¹⁹.

Gandhi followed Christ in holding that inward perfection and discipline are alone not sufficient, developing the social morality, and spiritualizing the laws of the state are also an imperative.

Leo Tolstoy

From Tolstoy's writings Gandhi was primarily awakened to the importance of manual work. His faith

in the voluntary bread labour originated from Tolstoy.

Of course, Ruskin's Unto This Last deepened his faith and his high estimation of the life of the agriculturist. In his words :

"The Law, that to live man must work, first came home to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on Bread-labour"²⁰.

When in South Africa, Gandhi was a "Tolstoy-an". He founded a "Tolstoy Farm" and lived according to Tolstoy's teachings.

Gandhi, like Tolstoy, counted a man, who abstains from manual labour, to be a thief, a parasite on others. All men, great or small, high or low, rich or poor must earn their bread by physical labour. If one works daily and shares the production of his country with others, one does the service to humanity and carries out the dictates of God.

Doing physical labour does not undermine the intellectual capacity, rather improves it. In the Vedic and Upanisadic ages, men used to do body labour along with intellectual and spiritual works. Besides, every man has an obligation to society as to himself. The necessity of body - labour or bread labour has increased all the more at the present time²¹. It is an imperative duty which must be performed by each and every man.

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence also was partly derived from Tolstoy's writings. Although the eternal message of nonviolence was taught earlier by Mahavira, Buddha, Christ and others, Tolstoy was, according to Gandhi, its best advocate in modern times. Through Tolstoy the Christian doctrine of brotherly love made a deep impression on Gandhi. It was he who revived the faith in the ancient truth of non-violence so forgotten and oblivious in the industrialised and scientific age of today.

Both Tolstoy and Gandhi highlighted the sublime and spiritual nature of man. Love, and not force or violence, is the supreme and unique law of human life. It is the aspiration for communion and solidarity with other souls, and that aspiration always liberates the sources of noble activities. For Gandhi, ahimsa was a panacea for all evils, mundane and extramundane.

Moreover, both these social thinkers condemned the modern industrial civilization, and the cruel machinery of the State (viz., military, police, courts) as these offend against the law of love. And both were against concentration of power and resources of the state in the hands of a few. But whereas Gandhi gave detailed scheme of the order and functions of such a society, Tolstoy gave none. Both believed in the inherent goodness



of man, in the possibility of his moral and spiritual transformation and in the efficacy of the purity of means.

Besides, both Tolstoy and Gandhi believed that man is a part of the divide whole, called God. Tolstoy felt it in his own being and categorically expressed it :

"I Knew that He existed and that I existed in Him, that outside that there is nothing. I was in Him a limited being in the illimitable, He is in me the illimitable within the limited"²².

Lastly, both Gandhi and Tolstoy dedicated their lives in search of Truth. Tolstoy himself said :

"The heroine of my writings, she whom I love with all the forces of being, she who always was, is, and will be beautiful, is truth"²³.

Yet Gandhi went ahead of Tolstoy in certain respects. While Tolstoy merely had an intellectual recognition of the value of Truth, Non-violence and love, Gandhi made them the guiding principles of man's life and action. For the former, violence or force should never be utilized in any of its forms. But, as Dhawan has observed, in certain cases, for Gandhi, even killing may be ahimsa. As life involves some amount of violence, Tolstoy turned away from it; Gandhi, on the other hand, follows the Gita's ideal of action without attachment and eagerly

participates in life. Due to this vital difference, Gandhi excels Tolstoy in working out non-violent technique²⁴.

Henry David Thoreau :

Gandhi regarded Thoreau as 'a kindred soul'. He was directly influenced by Thoreau's 'Essay on Civil Disobedience', which became an effective spiritual weapon in his hands in the form of Satyagraha. Besides this, Thoreau, like Gandhi, drew materials of his philosophy mostly from the ancient Indian thought. It is, therefore, natural that Gandhi would be inspired by these ideas of Thoreau which were similar to his.

Firstly, for both, the Bhagavadgita was a never-failing compendium for the solution of life's problems.

Secondly, to Gandhi as to Thoreau, philosophy was not merely an intellectual pastime but a guide to living. Both believed in life as an integral whole without any compartments.

Thirdly, both had a great regard for the ancient ideal of simple life resulting in real happiness. Thoreau himself said that "most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation

of mankind²⁵. According to him, money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.

Fourthly, both believed in the efficacy of temperance and vegetarianism for the spiritual progress.

Fifthly, both the thinkers believed in keeping the body healthy and strong so that it serves as a vehicle for the expression of the soul. Both believed with the ancient seers that body is the temple of God (Deho devalayah proktah). And they attached high importance to temperance and purity, as the precondition to reach divinity.

Sixthly, both Thoreau and Gandhi, inspite of seeing men as essentially good and spiritual, believed that there is an element of pasu (animal) in every one of us which is the cause of our bondage or pasa. Man must struggle hard to free himself from this pasu and pasa in him.

But, while Gandhi had full faith in men's ability to overcome his lower nature, Thoreau had some doubts. For him, man's beastiality cannot be wholly expelled, like the worms which even in life and health occupy our bodies. Possibly we may withdraw from it, but never change its nature.

Lastly, both Gandhi and Thoreau believed in the existence of a harmony or concord in nature, called

by ancient Indian thinkers as Rita. What was Rita or cosmic order in nature becomes Satya or truth or the moral order in the heart of man.

Islam :

Gandhi interpreted Islam as a religion of peace. Though Muslims are too frequent with their swords, Quran does not preach violence²⁶. By citing many parallel passages from both the scriptures, Gandhi showed that the surrender of ego to God is preached in the Bhagavadgita as well as in the Quran²⁷. A follower of Islam is one who does righteous actions, puts his life for truth.

Gandhi found in Islam, a revolt against idolatry and anthropatry. God of Islam is both immanent and transcendent. Quran says "He hath created the heavens and the earth with Truth. High be He exalted above all"²⁸. Yet this God is the supreme theistic principle-Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. As it says : "Unto Allah belong the East and West, and whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance Lo : Allah is All-embracing, All knowing"²⁹.

Gandhi saw that though Mahammed had to take up arms against the wrong doers, yet he had love for all mankind. His wars were mainly for defence. He forgave

his conquered enemies. In fact, he taught the religious principles of toleration, sympathy and non-violence to mankind.

Andrews has rightly observed that Gandhi's profound admiration for the character of the Prophet Muhammad, as a man of faith and action, and also for his son-in-law Ali, as a man of tender love and suffering, deeply affected him. He closely studied the historical record of the rise of Islam, and was impressed to a remarkable degree by the nobility of the early Caliphate and the fervent faith of the first followers of the Prophet. The simplicity of their life, their chivalrous devotion to the poor, their intense belief in God's over-ruling majesty - all these had a great effect upon him. There was a puritan^{^ strain} in Gandhi to which such things as these most forcibly appealed. Furthermore, the prophet's supreme, practical instinct as a Reformer, combined with his intense faith in God as the sole creator and Director of the universe, had been a constant strength and support to Mahatma Gandhi himself in his own struggle³⁰.

Thus, Gandhi's philosophy, though looks like an eclectic one, is unique because it is a synthesis, an integration. He used many old concepts but reinterpreted them in a new way, keeping an eye to the modern conditions³¹. The catholicity of his views may be attributed to a variety of sources from which he

liberally and judiciously drew for the materials of his thought. Gandhi himself admitted,

"I have but endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Emerson and other writers besides the masters of Indian philosophy"³².

Of course the form and the shape given to these are his own. The religious eclecticism was matched by his spirit of protestantism. He would not take ^{^ an} interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense³³. His religion was deeper than people may imagine. Some of his opinions are vital parts of his being. Even after taking different ideas from different sources, Gandhi remained basically a Hindu. Hinduism satisfied his soul, filled his whole being, and he found solace in the Bhagavadgita and Upanishads. But he was no ordinary Hindu. He accepted the Bhagavadgita as his spiritual guide but horrified the orthodox H indus by showing untouchability as contrary to the spirit of Hinduism³⁴.

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CHAPTER : 1THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN(1) The Nature of Man.

The Darwinian theory of the 'Descent of Man' from the ape treats man no other than an animal. Psycho-analysts reduce man to the instinctual, to the animal. The Hedonists look upon man as a creature which always seeks its own physical pleasure as any other animal. On the other hand, the Kantian type of Rationalistic theory rigorously stresses only the 'rational' man.

Gandhi revolted against all sorts of attempts at reductionism and over-simplification in the description of human nature. According to him, man is neither matter alone nor spirit alone, he is a rare combination of both. He is rational animal. And a true concept of man requires a due consideration to be given to both these aspects.

Man shares many propensities (e.g. birth, growth, appetites, instincts, decay and death) with animals. And in eating, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the brute¹. Sometimes of course, his animality gets

upperhand in him. He often succumbs to temptation and selfishness and blind rage, loves power and possession to the exclusion of more valuable things of life, follows authority of one man blindly like a sheep. And nowhere has human nature risen to the full height which full non-violence demands². All this is, Gandhi said, because we still share the qualities of our remote, reputed ancestors³. However, this shows only, one aspect of man, but not what is uniquely human. The essence of man, according to him, is his spirituality or divinity and the fundamental supremacy of his conscience, variously described by Gandhi as "the voice of god", "the inner voice" or the "still small voice". For him, man is a "creature of God striving to realise his divinity"⁴. By man is meant not merely man as animal but as creature possessing in addition to his body both mind and soul"⁵.

Man is unique in the sense that he is neither beast nor god, yet he partakes of the nature of both. He may be bestial in origin, if Darwin is right, but he is man precisely because he is potentially and essentially divine. Gandhi believed in Urdu saying : "Adam Khuda nahin, lekin Khuda ke nur se Adam juda nahin" (Adam i.e. man is not god, but neither is he different from the light or spark of god)⁶. If so, his life's mission should be to search for and find his divine essence which lies dormant

in him. To quote Gandhi :

"We are perhaps all originally brutes, and I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute. We were thus born brute strength, but we were born in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation"⁷

God realization means Truth realization for Gandhi which is nothing but self-realization, Thus the natural course of man's evolution is : "From beast, through man, to God"⁸.

Gandhi did not believe that possession of soul is the monopoly of human beings. His view of identity of all life is rooted in the belief that there are souls in sub-human beings too, But man, distinctively, is capable of "conscious striving to realize the spirit within"⁹, while "in brute, the soul lies ever dormant"¹⁰. So, not just the possession, but the conscious cultivation of the divinity that makes man matchless.

Gandhi's faith in the metaphysical unity between God and man led him to describe the relation between man and man also as divine. After all, we are all children of the same God¹¹. Potentially, therefore, human nature is same everywhere and "all life in essence is one"¹².

The faculty of reason is a distinctive feature in the human constitution, by virtue of which man can think for himself¹³. Gandhi's remark that unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason¹⁴ shows that reason is the manifestation of the spirit or divinity that is immanent in man. It is not a super addition to but the very life breath of man, from which follow ~~the very~~ his self-consciousness, discrimination and free-will i.e., all the moral qualities of man. But "the brute has no such thing. It is not a free agent and knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man being a free agent knows these distinctions and when he follows his higher nature shows himself far superior to the brute, but when he follows his baser nature can show himself lower than the brute"¹⁵. ~~Man~~ It also speaks for the immense potentiality, elasticity and infinite modifiability of human nature since it is "given to human beings to learn from the mistakes and not to repeat them".¹⁶

A man's reason permeates all his actions and feelings. He not only thinks rationally, but also can guide his feelings and activities rationally, and to renounce the very sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate.

The very derivation of the word Manusya shows that man is both a thinking and a feeling being. And it is man's privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both. While in brute the soul lies ever dormant, in man reason quickens and guides the feeling, thereby awakens the dormant soul. Man's moral and spiritual progress owes much to his faculty of reason. He has freedom to do or not to do things voluntarily. Yet the dignity of man requires that he should do what is really good for him, i.e., what pushes him ahead towards the goal of his life. Man has risen higher by dint of his moral instincts and moral institutions. "What distinguishes him from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane¹⁷. The questions of 'good', 'right', 'ought' etc. bother a man and not an animal. Hence, the law of nature as applied to the one is different from the law of nature as applied to the other¹⁸.

The Marxian economic concept of man did not satisfy Gandhi. For, as Bertocci has rightly pointed out, "ought" is a part of human nature and it cannot be derived from want urges¹⁹.

Gandhi's belief in the essential unity and goodness of all men is the basis of his faith in the universal moral progress, Progress is man's distinction, man's alone, not beasts²⁰. To him, the primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of human species²¹. Even an evil man is not evil for all time to come, but is liable to be changed by proper treatment, since there is something good in every man²². And there are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music²³.

Gandhi recognised the supremacy of spirit over matter. Man has an end in view. And this, according to Gandhi, is to know Truth or God, the creator. Of all the animal creation of God, Man is the only animal who has been created in order that he may know his Maker. Man's aim in life is not, therefore, to add from day to day to his material possessions but his predominant calling is from day to day to come nearer his own Maker²⁴. The desire to worship God is inconceivable in the brute. It must be, and is, man's nature to know and find God. When he worships Satan, he acts contrary to his nature²⁵.

It is true that man often commits mistakes or loses the view of his goal : "Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps²⁶". Yet we should not despair of our nature. Rather, we should constantly try to refine our base nature and rise higher and higher. This rise is possible only through the recognition of the great law of non-violence i.e. love that environs us. Gandhi says : "

"I believe that sumtotal of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love. The fact that mankind persists shows that the cohesive force is greater than the disruptive force, centripetal force greater than centrifugal"²⁷.

Gandhi differed from the Marxian view that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class - struggle"²⁸, based on means of production. According to him, the root of all progress and evolution of society is the non - violent co-operation. No doubt there are cases of revolution, violence and bloody wars. But humanity has made progress inspite of them, not because of them²⁹. In fact, nations have progressed both by evolution and revolution³⁰. Even, Gandhi's non-co-operation is a sort of revolution. The difference is that it is not an armed revolution.

It is an evolutionary revolution, a bloodless revolution. It is a revolution in one's ideas or thought, in one's spirit, hence a process of purification. Violence is an exception to human nature. The so - called history records only the exceptions, not the rule. Hundreds of nations live in peace, but history does not take this into account³¹.

Man is capable of self-restraint, which the brute is not, "The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint."³² This self-restraint works in every field of his activity. In eating, drinking, even in sexual relation he must have self-control, without which his self-realization, the realization of God as Truth remains unattainable. As Gandhi says : "while to the man whose end and aim are realization of God, even the functions of eating and drinking can be natural only with in certain limits. For having knowledge of God as his end he will not eat or drink for the sake of enjoyment but solely for sustaining the body. Restraints and renunciation will, therefore, always be his watch-words even in respect of these functions"³³. And "the duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast"³⁴.

Gandhi believed in the evolution of man, not in the mechanical sense but in the teleological sense, the elan vital being the spiritual urge for rising higher above the animality. According to him, the human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment, in terms of spirituality. Man's urge for constantly rising high is noticeable in his very stature :

"Man has risen to higher state after countless births in brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl. Beastiality is as far removed from manhood as matter from spirit"³⁵.

Gandhi recognized that struggle for existence and violence are a fact of human life. True, that man as animal is violent; yet it is also true that he, as spirit, is non-violent. And the dignity of man demands that man must overcome the claims of the matter or flesh by the claims of his spirit. The selfless-service and sacrifice for mankind and acceptance of voluntary suffering are ways for it :

"Man's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man"³⁶.

There is a beauty and dignity in voluntary suffering. It is heroic and more powerful than violence. Suffering is the law of human beings, war that of beasts of the jungle. And suffering is infinitely more

powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason. While reason appeals more to head, the penetration of the heart comes from suffering.

(ii) The Destiny of Man.

Gandhi's firm conviction in the divine origin of man led him to declare the destiny (i.e., the ultimate goal) of human life to be God-realization or self-realization (in other words, Truth-realization or Salvation). The self to be realized is the Higher or the Inner self and not the lower or external self.

Buddha rejected the psycho-somatic complex of personality as 'empty of self'. Man suffers because he endeavours to see a permanent self with his wants and desires. He, therefore, asked man to develop a 'selfless attitude'. Gandhi also, like Buddha, rejected the psychological approach to personality as it wrongly equates the individual-body and its mechanical laws with the self. The body cannot be the self. Firstly because, the self or Reality is abiding, while the body or matter is temporary. The dissolution of matter is absolutely certain at some point³⁷. Besides, of the two aspects of things (the internal and the external), Gandhi held the internal to be more real and more important than the

external. The external has only an instrumental value. It has meaning only in so far as it helps the inward³⁸. For Gandhi, the body is not only something external but also a positive obstacle in realizing the Truth or Self. "No one can attain perfection while he is in body"³⁹.

Hume's theory that the person is a bundle or collection of perceptions misses this most significant point : The witness of the perceptions transcends, hence cannot be identical with the process of perception. The author of Taittiriya Upanisad discovered a series of five sheaths in which the witness-self is lost. Hume just stumbled at one of these sheaths.

Just as the body is not, so also the psychological self or ego is not, the real self, since it is also tied down by the shackles of the flesh⁴⁰.

The suggestion given in the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad is to get through the material elements and psychic faculties of man in order to rise to the Supreme self.⁴¹ The self of man is the Purusha, a little flame in the heart of all beings⁴². It is the truth of truth⁴³. In order to realize the nature of our true self, we must overcome our solid and gross ego, And one can overcome one's ego, Gandhi held, by cultivating humility

i.e., by reducing oneself to a zero⁴⁴. It is a step towards cultivating ahimsa which is the furthest limit of humility.

"The seeker after Truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet but the seeker after Truth should be so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not ~~till he has~~ then, will he have a glimpse of Truth"⁴⁵.

Buddha never spoke of the existence of a self higher than the one he denied. But Gandhi's faith in the idealistic tradition of Hindu philosophy led him to believe in the existence of a Universal self as the Ultimate Reality, which transcends the individual ego, but is necessarily pre-supposed by the ego. It is immortal. It persists after the dissolution of the body and the ego⁴⁶.

Gandhi stated this Ultimate Reality variously as the Summum Bonum of life, Truth, knowledge and Bliss, the Law maker and the Law and the Executor, Upholder of justice, Lord and Master, Good, God of the poor and protector of the faithful and preserver of their honour. It is the "spirit within" oneself, and not outside. P.T. Raju speaks of it as the "essence of man's conscious being, the Universal Spirit in him"⁴⁷. It is the dharma within man which sustains him and lifts him above his lower nature. The negation of it "represents

man's estrangement from himself"⁴⁸.

Man's goal of life, therefore, consists in the realization of his Real Self. Gandhi described this as seeing Truth or God -- the First principle or abiding source of all beings -- face to face. Though we often use the term 'self-knowledge' the self cannot be an object of knowledge-process, which ordinarily presupposes subject - object distinction. In fact, the self is presupposed in all cases of knowledge. Hence it cannot be known. It is to be 'realized'. Self-realization or God-realization is, therefore, not a rational process, but an intuitive one - a matter of faith which transcends reason.

Salvation has two aspects. Positively, it means the realization of God, Self or Truth. Negatively, it is freedom or emancipation of the soul⁴⁹. The Gita, in preaching the disinterested action (niskama karma) spoke of the liberation as liberation from indecision and inaction leading to kṛāṇa - realization. Buddha spoke of deliverance from suffering and Sankara from avidyā or māyā. But for Gandhi, salvation meant deliverance from the deadly coil of himsa⁵⁰. When an individual is able to get salvation from violence, he shall be able to realize Truth⁵¹.

Gandhi's philosophy is primarily Truth-centred. Non-violence is the manifestation of Truth in the phenomenal world. Truth-realization or self-realization implies, therefore, the attainment of perfect non-violence. Violence pertains to the lower-self or brute-self. The realization of the Higher-self, therefore, consists in overcoming violence. Yet, all life in the flesh (i.e. embodied life) exists by reason of some violence. All have to destroy some life for sustaining their bodies and for protecting those under their care⁵². Even the moral and spiritual progress presupposes some kind of struggle, in which the spirit pulls men in one way and the flesh in the opposite direction, which is resolved into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free. All these, however, do not give us a justification for violence. The dignity of man requires that he will constantly strive for realizing the Truth through means of ahimsa. We become God-like to the extent we realize non-violence. Of course, we can never become wholly God. And we may ^{realize only} ~~realize that~~, partial truths. Even knowing that, a Satyagrahi will always try to commit, in all his actions, as little himsa as possible, after full and mature deliberation and having exhausted all remedies to avoid it. Although, in order to realize the Ultimate Truth, the votary of ahimsa must always pray for an ultimate deliverance from

the bondage of the flesh, which is source of all kinds of violence. And such deliverance is not possible without the grace of God.

But self-realization or salvation, Gandhi would say, is not merely an individualistic aim. The strictly isolated individual is literally non-existent. So, the salvation for the individual except in relation to every other individual is simply unthinkable. Truth is not a matter of individual practice, but of practice by groups, communities and nations. Gandhi's idea of Godman identity and man-man unity led him to declare : "I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity"⁵³.

The ancient Hindu ideal of moksa has usually been of an individualistic character. Sweitzer describes this as "world and life-negation ideal". The individual strives for his own salvation leaving the world behind. Sankara, following traditional Vedanta, emphasised merely the salvation of the individual. To Aurovindo, the salvation of the individual effects a metamorphosis in his immediate environment, lit up by the transformed personality of the realized soul. This ideal underwent a drastic change later, thanks chiefly to the shock given by Mahayan Buddhism.

In the Srimad - Bhagavata we find the new revolutionary ideal of collective salvation reflected in unequivocal terms. Rantideva, for example, declared that he wanted neither an empire, nor heaven, nor moksa. What he did want was the alleviation of sufferings of living beings. A similar statement is found in Kumbekona edition of Mahabharata in these words :

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं, न स्वर्गं, नापुनर्भवम् ।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम् ॥

That is, I want neither kingdom, nor paradise, nor cessation of transmigration, viz., moksa. I want nothing but the alleviation of suffering of living beings.

Gandhi happened to be the first Hindu philosopher to take this revised ideal of moksa seriously enough, declaring that he did not cherish the ideal of cessation of births and deaths and that he was all for being reborn to serve the downtrodden. Gandhi's conception of salvation avoids two extremes. It is individual's salvation, but neither for individual's own sake, nor for the sake of society alone, It is reformation and reorientation of society for the sake of the individual's self realization. So a seeker after Truth must devote himself to the selfless service of

humanity, and thus 'spiritualize and moralize his surroundings'. Perfect salvation can be achieved only when the whole world is redeemed. Thus Gandhi was an advocate of the Jivanmukti rather than of the videha mukti ideal. He was an upholder of the ideal of renunciation in all its forms. But for the liberation of his ~~S~~soul he did not seek refuge to in a cave. He regarded activity in the world as the highest form of renunciation of the world. In his words : "My service to my people is part of the discipline to which I subject my self in order to free my soul from the bonds of the flesh ... For me the path to salvation leads through unceasing tribulation in the service of my fellow countrymen and humanity".⁵⁴

Gandhi prescribed eleven vows as ways of disciplining a satyagrahi, for the service of humanity, therefore, of both individual and social salvation. While other seven vows (e.g., non-violence, truthfulness, continence, non-possession etc.) are traceable in the ancient Indian religious heritage as forming an essential part of an individual's ethico-religious discipline leading to his salvation, the vows of bread-labour, equal respect for all religions, swadeshi and the abolition of untouchability Gandhi added in answer to the social needs of the modern age.

In his English version of "The Gospel of Selfless Action" Mahadev Desai has referred to a two-fold purpose which prompted Gandhi to preach Apasaktiyoga :

(a) The ultimate aim was to show man the path of self-realization through life and all its actions undertaken with a spirit of detachment at the beginning, to rise to the spirit of total submission to the Divine will, in the end. (b) To give people religious, spiritual and moral guidance, which he himself got from the Bhagavadgita. This shows that there was nothing in the world that he would not share with humanity. Once he himself said : "What cannot be shared with the masses is taboo for me"⁵⁵.

Gandhian teaching, while it may help individual salvation, is not only not restricted to it, but it must overflow to include social salvation of the whole mankind. The four words - Satya (truth), ahimsa (non-injury), Satyagraha (adherence to truth) and Sarvodaya (welfare of all) - together constitute a whole system of thought and action which envisages the collective salvation of humanity. As Diwakar observes : "It was the passion for realizing truth through love alone and the passion to establish truth in daily life for social salvation through service and sacrifice, which was the basic fact about Gandhi and his satyagraha way of life"⁵⁶.

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C H A P T E R : T H R E E

GANDHIAN MAN & THE DOCTRINE OF PURITY OF MEANS.

(i) End - Means Identity.

Though Gandhi did not develop it in a very systematic way in his writings, the problem of the relationship between ends and means remains one of the basic features of his thinking. It derives its meaning and importance, in Gandhian philosophy, from a strong moral foundation.

There are two views on this :- One school of thought, headed by Kautilya, Machiavelli, Hitler, Stalin and others, held that the end justifies means. Engels, the Communist philosopher, declared in his letter to Herson Trier in 1889.

"Any means that leads to the aim suits me as a revolutionary, whether it is the most violent or that which appears to be most peaceable"¹.

The humanitarian philosophers, like Buddha, Gandhi and others, on the other hand, insisted that good ends can not be achieved by evil means. Means and ends are convertible terms in Gandhian philosophy of life and any kind of cleavage between them will be artificial. And end is the goal we want to achieve and the means is

the way we adopt to attain it. The means is the end in the embryo and is determined and conditioned by the end. There is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree².

The end, says Dewey, "is merely a series of acts viewed at a remote stage; and a means is merely the series viewed at an earlier one. The distinction of means and ends arises in surveying the course of a proposed line of action, a connected series in time. The 'end' is the last act thought of; the means are the acts to be performed prior to it in time ... Means and ends are two names for the same reality. The terms denote not a division in reality but a distinction in judgement"³.

When we choose the end we also choose the means simultaneously. And we choose that means which is appropriate to the end in view, not any and every means. The validity of means cannot be judged in the abstract i.e., without its relation to the end. Again, means adopted, colour the desired end. We reap exactly as we sow. Thus,

"If I want to deprive you of your watch, I shall certainly have to fight for it; if I want to buy your watch, I shall have to pay for it; and if I want a gift, I shall have to plead for it; and according to the means I employ, the watch is stolen property, my own property or a donation. Thus we see three different results from three different means"⁴.

It is thus neither possible nor desirable to detach the end from the means employed for its attainment⁵.

Gandhi was led to the view of the 'end - means' identity and their convertibility by his early acceptance of Truth and Non-violence as twin moral absolutes and their consistent relationship. For him, non-violence is to truth what means are to the end. He was a true votary of ahimsa, as he was a whole - hearted devotee to truth. His experiments with Truth revealed to him the importance of non-violence, and his adoption of non-violence took him nearer to his Truth. As he himself said :

"A Jain muni once rightly said, I was not so much a votary of ahimsa as I was of truth, and I put the latter in the first place and the former in the second. For as he put it I was capable of sacrificing non-violence for the sake of truth. In fact it was in the pursuit of my truth that I discovered non-violence"⁶.

It is, for Gandhi, not proper to assign to Non-violence merely an instrumental role. From one stand point, it is a means to Truth. Yet it is much more than that. It is itself Truth, since it is Love, and Truth or God is Love. That is why between reality, love and non-violence one cannot make any discriminatory separation in the absolute or ontological sense. Gandhi said :

"Ahimsa is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for Ahimsa, Truth says, 'Find it through me' When I look for Truth, Ahimsa Says, 'Find it through me'⁷.

(ii) Means exalted over ends : the doc-
of Purity of Means.

Gandhi did not rest satisfied with showing the ontological identity of means and ends, he went further to lay stress more on means than on ends. Simply seeing the possibility of achieving a goal is not enough, the means adopted for its realization must also be properly ascertained and examined. In an article published in 1924, Gandhi categorically remarked :

"They say 'means are after all means' I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end ... Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception"⁸.

Gandhi was influenced by these lines of the Gita :

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम कर्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ १

And he interpreted these in his own way as :

"Whatever a man sows, that shall he reap. The law of Karma is inexorable and impossible of evasion"¹⁰.

Gandhi extended his concept of the priority of means to the sphere of his social and political activities. His stress on duty rather than on rights followed from it.

Yet Gandhi was not blind to the importance of the goodness of the end. He stood for ideals and ideals are nothing but goals worthy of pursuit i.e. ends that call forth activity and conserve values. But once the goal is determined he concentrated all his efforts in perfecting the means to attain the goal. Besides, he realized that the clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there, if we do not know to utilize the means of achieving it. Hence we should be concerned principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. And once we take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured : "our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means"¹¹.

Gandhi took to politics because he looked upon it as the branch of ethics and religion, and in order to enable the submerged millions to attain the good life, to raise the quality of human beings, to train them for freedom and fellowship, for spiritual depth and social harmony. A politician who works for these end cannot help being religious, cannot also ignore the formative share of morality in civilization or take the side of evil against good.

The question for Gandhi then was not whether the end must be good or not. The question was whether an end could continue to remain good if the means adopted to attain it were reprehensible. Many humanists of our age—Aldous Huxley and Gilbert Murray, for instance—feel with Gandhi that an end which either demands or justifies unworthy means cannot be good. The dust that soils the means also soils the end.

For Gandhi, Truth is the end, the absolute goal of every moral individual. And it is impossible to attain truth through violence, deception and cunning. The moment a man even conceives the possibility of achieving it through such means, it ceases to be truth. Gandhi thought that man can only endeavour, he cannot command results. The creator has given us controls (and that too are very limited) over means, none over the end.¹² The ultimate goal (i.e. realization of the Absolute Truth) is unattainable. We are, therefore, left with our choice of means only. And in the process of fashioning the path we fashion the destination as well, to the extent it is possible for a finite being.

Means, says Gandhi, to be means must be always within our reach¹³. They are determinate. While the end - the realization of the ultimate is

indeterminate. Even proximate ends which are more concrete than the absolute aim of truth-realization are also in the future. "Hence, we must take 'one step at a time' and do what we know to be practical"¹⁴. As moral beings, our immediate responsibility, is to keep our conduct right i.e. to do good action through morally good means:

"Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough we do our part well ... Ours is but to strive. In the end as He wishes"¹⁵.

Gandhi's philosophy of action is influenced by the disinterested action of the Gita :
 "To work thou hast the right, never to the fruits thereof".

Gandhi did not accept violent means for achieving a goal, whether individual or collective¹⁶. He did not want to achieve political independence for India by violent means, even if it were possible. He said :

"If India take up arms, she may achieve a rapid victory. In such a case India would lose her place as the pride of my heart"¹⁷.

A goal achieved by wrong means is not a real goal, but proves before long, to be an illusion. Human culture, says D.M. Datta, has become possible because people have learnt to control hatred and selfishness and civilization flourishes as long as they

are replaced by good will and love¹⁸. Gandhi's insistence on non-violent means to achieve freedom for the country should have to be understood in the background of his fundamental ethical belief : "What is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword"¹⁹. His philosophy of action as expressed in Satyagraha (which is a synthesis of both Truth and Non-violence) can only be understood and appreciated in terms of ends - means relationship.

(iii) Critical Estimate.

There are two kinds of opinions regarding Gandhi's views on means and end : (a) According to some social thinkers, Gandhi was too rigid about means. Dynamics of social change sometimes demands unorthodox methods, but his rigidity would clash with the concept of social progress. In a revolution, for example, one cannot be too choosy about the propriety of every step. All that matters is the rightness of the goal. (b) Others have seen wisdom in Gandhi's insistence upon the purity of means and held that exclusive stress on end results in the commitment of every conceivable type of violence and aggression, threatening the very survival of humanity and the destruction of the spiritual foundations of human life.

According to the first group of thinkers, the emphasis on means is out of tune with modern sociological point of view. To think in terms of social good is to think more in terms of ends than of means. Besides, by asking for nothing beyond personal rectitude, Gandhi seemed to have belittled the scientific and rational approach to the future of human society. "One step is enough for me", he said; and he did not try to peep into the future or to have a clearly conceived end before him. His maxims like 'look after the means and the end will take care of itself' and 'Be good in your personal, individual lives and all else will follow' do not reveal a political or scientific attitude. He laid all the stress on character and attached little importance on intellectual training. If intellect without character is harmful, character without intellect is useless.

It is true that Gandhi's stress on means had a limiting effect on consequences. Consequences delimited by him are primarily external ones i.e. material and apparent consequences, such as political and economic. But he put highest premium on the spiritual goal of self-realization which spells the real success for man.

D.M. Datta rightly says that

'mere apparent success which results from the use of wrong means must not be confused with real success'.²⁰

Man cannot take to any course of action, however expedient, which is not morally justified. The achievement of the end is not the criterion of success for man as a moral being. The purity of means is more important than the desirability of the end. And it is Gandhi's firm conviction that if means are pure, one is bound to reach the appropriate goal. On the contrary, if means are forgotten, the ends aimed at escape us.

Thus from the moral standpoint means is of higher value than the goal. As Gandhi said :

"You must not worry whether the result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means correct. Really, it means that things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the rest to Him"²¹.

Ultimately it is only through pure means that we can achieve real happiness; immoral means cannot achieve a moral end. Even if we fail to achieve the end, the mere use of pure means will ennoble man and give him contentment. And this is the way to progress. ~~In Gandhi's words :~~

Gandhi's injunction of 'one step at a time' shows his practical wisdom. He had the eyes to see the extent and limit of our free-will, that the individual's capacity to determine what he can do in any specific situation at any given time is much greater than his power of anticipation, prediction and control over the consequences of his actions. Hence his practical recommendation was to take care of the means. We must be primarily even wholly concerned with the immediate adoption of what we regard as morally worthy (i.e., intrinsically justifiable) means.

Dhawan says that the main stress is on means partly because man can only pursue or aim at, he cannot determine the consequences which may also be influenced by other factors. We can control means, but not goals²².

Gandhi rightly understood that the results of our deed can be known in part only and the unknown part is often greater than the known part. Again, an action affects the doer himself and affects others. Being without complete knowledge of consequences, we resort to the analysis of motives. If the motive is not good, at least the spiritual consequences which affect the doer cannot be good. But motive by itself

is not enough, it must be supplemented by an analysis of the means adopted by the doer to fulfil his motive, which will reflect his intention. On this reckoning, bad means can never bring a purely good result, because the total consequence involves a spiritually negative development.

Gandhi's moral doctrine is teleological in principle, like Indian ethics in general. According to the law of Karma, every moral deed always influences the subject. Each deed has a double effect : it produces the expected result and also leaves its mark on the doer's mind and affects his character. Gandhi accepted the general Indian rule that activity must be just 'in thought, word and deed'. The deed begins in the mind as intention (motive + means), which has, therefore, a primary meaning and must in any case be considered.

Whether a certain deed is right or wrong, whether an action is violent or non-violent, can be studied from both the motives and consequences. And for Gandhi, it is easier for one to be aware of one's motives than of consequences. The surest way of getting good results is to take care of the purity of motives and means. Self-analysis and purification of one's motives is a more certain way to right action than the analysis of the external aim.

Gandhi's metaphysical belief in the "law" of Karma - the "law of the ethical causation or moral retribution that links all the acts of interdependent individuals - related to his notion of society as a Community of spiritually indivisible units, The psychology of human action in a morally indivisible community of apparently isolated units demands that the means and relationship must be seen in terms of the consistent growth in moral awareness of individuals and communities and not in relation to the mechanical division of time into arbitrary and discrete intervals²³.

Gandhi had firm faith in his own theory of the purity of means, and he himself had followed it in his life. But he seemed to have taken no notice of the exception to this ideal. Once he himself uttered : "Often does good come out of evil". But he offered no explanation for this, and avoided the problem by saying : "that is God's, not man's plan²⁴. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good". Besides, India, under the leadership of Gandhi, took to "peaceful and legitimate" means in her struggle for freedom. But it has not, it seems, reached the end she strove for. It is thus difficult to explain the contradiction of the good means leading to not-so-good an end that we find in India today.

Gandhi's answer would be that means adopted for the liberation of India has not been executed honestly and universally. There were cases of violence (e.g., terrorist movement) too. And non-violence followed by Indians, in some cases, was non-violence of the weak, not of the courageous and honest hence not a pure means. Or, he would ask us not to look at the result. One day, the inexorable law of karma will reward the doer in an appropriate manner. For him, it is psychologically and morally more uplifting to the individual in particular and society in general to think in terms of means than in terms of results.

It appears that Gandhi's theory of priority of means is a grand ideal. But ideals cannot be translated into practice. For saints it may be all right; but for common men, simply a consideration of the purity of means is not enough. For them the question of end is also a very big one. Gandhi seemed to have attached little importance on the functional and teleological side of the problem. It is no doubt true that the adoption of a perfect means leads to its appropriate goal. But is it not true that in working for the end, man also works for perfecting the means also? Besides, there may arise situation when a man has to adopt a so-called impure means (e.g., telling

a lie) for a good end (e.g., saving the life of an innocent man). Or, there are some facts (e.g. military secrets of any state) which must, of necessity, be kept secret, even by taking recourse to falsehood. Gandhi, it appears, had not thought over such practical problems. Gandhi did not discuss the question of efficacy of means. He was more concerned with the morality of means. The individual concerned is to choose the particular means which he thinks (in line with ^{his} enlightened conscience) suitable and most efficient at a particular time.

However, the merit of Gandhi's doctrine of purity of means lies in his establishing a balanced sort of relation between end and means, keeping in view the dignity of man as a unique moral agent working for the spiritual salvation of mankind. The establishment of a right relation between means and end assumes a greater significance in the present era of rapid socio-economic changes when everyone, caught in an atmosphere of unpredictability and insecurity, is anxious to reap quick results by any means. In Hind Swaraj, he expressed the view that even great men, generally known to be religious, have committed grievous crimes through the mistaken belief that there is no moral connection or interdependence between the means and the end. But everybody will accept that we cannot get a rose through planting a noxious weed.

As a social and political reformer Gandhi spoke from different levels at different times. To mix them up is to miss the central point of Gandhi's thought.

One may distinguish three levels in his writings : (a) that of perfect ideal (unrealisable), (b) his personal point of view (admitting himself to be far from perfect, yet sufficiently advanced to practise his ideals) and (c) the point of view of the common man in general and Indian masses in particular. Yet, it is implied in all these that 'though the ideal may be impossible of attainment, the very act of pursuing it generates the good will essential for the well being of the corporate life 25.

Gandhi laid down moral ideals for the individuals in their relation to society. Their value, as ideals, consists in pointing out the direction, not in their realisation. The performer's ethical stature will only determine to what extent these ideals can be practised. As ethical capacity and situations of individuals differ, their actual practice and realization also will differ and cannot be uniform. Viewing man in his concreteness, Gandhi granted many exceptions to his

ideal of absolute non-violence. He would allow violence (including destruction of life even) only when necessary (a) for sustaining life and health, e.g. while we breathe, eat food or use disinfectants; (b) for protecting those under our care or for the benefit of others, e.g., we kill carnivorous beasts, poisonous animals, a man running amuck; (c) for the sake of those whose life is taken. The classic case was that of a heifer who was hurt in an accident, was in extreme pain and beyond cure, and put to sleep on Gandhi's orders; and (d) as a 'duty in distress' (apaddharma).

Gandhi came out with his message of purity of means to replace the weakness of human heart by freedom, spirit and courage. Freedom, for him, was not a mere political creed, but a social reality as the very essence of the soul. He said : "The attempt made to win Swaraj is Swaraj itself"²⁶. The outward freedom can be achieved but in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we have grown at a given moment. Hence we should concentrate our chief energy to effect reform from within,²⁷ because no man loses his freedom except through his own weakness²⁸. The Buddha said : "Ye who suffer, know ye suffer from yourselves; none else compels". Hence in self-purification lies the path to courage, removal of miseries and freedom. The spiritual power of Love is more effective than force or violence. Gandhi struggled not only to free India from

foreign rule but also to free her from social corruption and communal strife with a view to making India a free and united India²⁹. His rejection of the idea that ends justify the means 'implies the reject of war, espionage and crooked diplomacy, even when they are adopted for the so called noble ends of defending the country, religion or humanity³⁰.

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CHAPTER : FOURCONCEPT OF MAN VIS-À-VIS RAMARAJYA

Being an advocate of collective salvation, Gandhi was of the opinion that man's moral and ethical behaviour lies not in abstractness of a transcendental life, but in real earthly life itself. He viewed man in his concreteness, both as an individual and as a member of a social group. The social and the individual good act and react upon each other -- both being complementary, rather than contradictory. As he said :

"Self-evolution is wholly consistent with a nation's evolution. A nation cannot advance without the units of which it is composed advancing, and conversely no individual can advance without the nation of which he is part also advancing"¹.

Gandhi's advocacy of individual's self-realization through the service of men and his own participation in the political, social and economic activities may be interpreted as his application of the principles of morality in those fields of social life. In his words :

"... my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest of hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means"².

In olden times, morality was thought to be a thing for restricted and limited application within a particular social group, and economics and politics as fields of human activity to which moral laws could not be applied,³ the former being concerned with man's material life and the latter with spiritual and religious life. But for Gandhi, spiritual and moral values do not form an independent field of action. Rather, they are realizable only when applied to the practical day-to-day situations of life in society. A man's life is one integral whole, and there can be no double standards. For example, there cannot be different standards of religion and morality in man's personal life and say, in his business; or, in his family life and say, in politics.

But, Gandhi was thoroughly disgusted with the existing social environment. Modern civilization utterly lacks the kind of environment that should fulfil man's moral and spiritual demands. Far from supplying conditions favourable for his development, it curtails the freedom, the birth-right of the individual, and impedes his progress. It is a civilization which grinds down the masses and in which a few men capture power in the name of people and abuse it. Gandhi himself felt it as he said : "With me I feel that the modern life is not right".⁴ The modern democracies,

he observed, are nothing but distorted form of Nazism or Fascism -- a disguised form of imperialism⁵. And the so-called democracy in India in the hands of the British, is much worse. It has made people "impotent" and "frustrated"⁶.

Gandhi, therefore, sought to adumbrate the features of an ideal, well-ordered society -- the Ramarajya. By 'Ramarajya', however, Gandhi did not mean the rule of Rama, the son of the king Dasharatha of Ayodhya⁷. He used the name 'Rama' to describe his God -- "the eternal, the unborn, the one without the second". Thus, by 'Ramarajya' he meant the kingdom of God (i.e. Truth) on earth. As Gandhi found his God in the very being of man, Ramarajya was, for him, the people's sovereignty.

In this sense, Ramaraj and Swaraj are synonymous terms⁸. Swaraj as a unique concept cannot be logically defined. But generally, it is "self-rule and self-restraint"⁹, in all affairs of life, both external and internal and "complete freedom of opinion and action without interference with another's right to equal freedom of opinion and action"¹⁰. The life in this ideal State, is self-regulated, just, well-ordered, absolutely free from all exploitation

and coercion -- whether political, economic or moral -- thereby getting fullest scope for the development of the self. In the context of India of that time, Gandhi meant by 'political' independence, the removal of the British army in every shape and form, by 'economic' freedom, the freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart, and by 'moral' freedom the freedom from defence forces. Yet freedom with reference to the concept of Ramarajya is not restricted to the replacement of the British army by a nationalist army of occupation. Rule or Government by any kind of army -- be it national or other -- is not freedom. Simply political freedom -- without the character, the national solidarity inherent in a spirit or programme of mutual helpfulness among the people is an illusion, a meaningless term.

Gandhi laid stress on the spiritual nature of man. And the essence of the spirit or soul is freedom. It is above and beyond both matter and mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom.

According to Hinduism, said Gandhi, an individual must be free to do what he considers to be best for self-realization¹¹. Such individual freedom

is perfect only in a completely non-violent society¹². In an environment of actual freedom, even the weakest member must rise to his moral height¹³. And Gandhi would reject any social structure which inhibits individual's freedom. Violence is the negation of freedom. It is exploitation in its essence. Exploitation draws attention to disvalues and prevents the individual from realizing his true self. Freedom, Gandhi would say, is not escape from nature and social reality. Man lives in unity with nature. But by his own activities, experience and knowledge, he tries to transcend the boundaries imposed by nature and the institutional structure of society and to transcend himself.

Hence, Gandhi's ideal society is a completely non-violent society -- a replica of the family-life¹⁴ -- free from all kinds of social disabilities. The truest Swaraj was to him the Government over the self (Swa-raj).

Thus the first step to Swaraj lies with the individual:

"If the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom"¹⁵.

Gandhi believed in the great truth :

'As with the individual, so with the universe'. Hence Swaraj of a people means the sum-total of the Swaraj (Self-rule) of individuals¹⁶ implying both self-control and self-sacrifice, in contradistinction to foreign rule (pararaj) in every sense of the term. This is the real sovereignty of the people.

Gandhi believed that each nation should have its own system of government in keeping with its own history, tradition, culture and civilization and not a mere imitation of another nation's. Thus we must have also our own government suited to our genius : Ours should be an "unadulterated Home rule, however inferior in quality it may be"¹⁷. And to him "Hind Swaraj, is the rule of the people, is the rule of justice"¹⁸.

Gandhi discovered that the cornerstone of modern society, based on violence and oppression, is exploitation leading, as a consequence, to centralization of power and politics. And this is but a natural consequence of a society where the spirit of self-sacrifice and

~~and~~

service does not act as an inspiration for all human activities. So, he asked the monied and capitalist class in particular and all men in general to cultivate the spirit of self-sacrifice and service in all their actions. An attitude of service should possess the mind of all men in general in Ramaraj : the strong serving the weak, the wealthy serving the poor, the learned serving the illiterate¹⁹. Service makes us conscious of the basic unity, equality and brotherhood of men, and the idea that "we are one of another".

Gandhi believed in the essential goodness of men. And he did not hold the landlords and capitalists alone to be responsible for the crime of exploitation going on in the society. He held the exploited persons i.e. their direct or indirect co-operation also as equally responsible. So the cure of this malady lies not in the extinction of the exploiters, but the transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer. Gandhi thus believed in co-operation and not in conflict. As a negative method in extreme cases non-violent non-cooperation may be resorted to by the exploited class. But the more fruitful positive method is, Gandhi suggested, the adoption of Trusteeship-system by the capitalists and wealthy persons.

In the ideal society of Gandhi's conception there should be equality of status of all men—none high, none low, no difference between the son of a weaver, of an agriculturist and of a school master²⁰. An atmosphere of happiness will prevail, resulting from self-control, simplicity of living, non-possession, voluntary body-labour, and selfless service. In Rajraj, there is basically no difference between a pauper and a prince, since all men are children of God and possess the same divinity.

Swaraj of Gandhi's dream the poor men's Swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by the poor men in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the monied men. But that does not mean that they should have palaces like the theirs (i.e., princes). These are not necessary for happiness. But a poor man ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys. Swaraj is not Purna Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to all under it²¹. Thus one of the material conditions for Purna Swaraj, said Gandhi, was "full economic freedom²² for the toiling masses" and "no unholy alliance with any interest for their exploitation"²³.

Gandhi had suggested several ways to deal with exploitation which is eating into the vitals of modern civilization. First of all, the cultivation of the

spirit of self-control and removing all profiteering motives. According to him, we should consider ourselves as thieves if we take anything that we do not need for our own immediate use and keep it. Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day; and if every body took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation. Hence we must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary privation in order that millions may be nursed, fed and clothed²⁴. Self-control also means conquest of lust which, according to Gandhi, is the highest endeavour of a man's or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust man cannot hope to rule over self. And without rule over self there can be no Swaraj or Ramaraj. Rule of all without rule of oneself would prove only deceptive. Performance of great social deeds like service of Harijans, cow-protection, village-reconstruction etc., calls forth spiritual effort which comes only through God's grace, and God's grace descends upon a person who is not a slave to lust²⁵.

Allied to self-control, is simplicity of living. Life in an ideal society should be based, not on the struggle for the satisfaction of varied and ever-growing wants, but on reducing them to the minimum. Instead

of the Marxian idea of "each according to his ability", Gandhi held the view of "each according to his need". And by "need" he always meant the "basic minimum need" for man for his survival and no more.

The idea of a simple life also connotes the idea of non-possession. Gandhi believed in 'Thoreau's saying that possession of riches is a crime and poverty a virtue under an unjust administration'²⁶. The principle of non-possession necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form. This reminds us of the monastic orders of all religions which were organized on the basis of no-private-property. Besides, possession of private property is not only useless, but also positively harmful for our moral and spiritual growth and caters to social-inequality. As Gandhi said in 1933 :

"Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after Truth, a follower of the Law of Love, cannot hold anything against tomorrow. God never stores for the morrow. He never creates more than what is needed for the moment. If therefore, we repose faith in His providence, we should rest assured that He will give us our daily bread, meaning everything that we require ... The rich has a superfluous store of things which they donot need and which are, therefore, neglected and wasted; while millions are starved to death for want of sustenance. If each retained possession only of what he needed ~~no~~ one would be in want and all would live in contentment"²⁷.

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The principle of non-possession also solves the problem of unemployment (and thereby exploitation)

to a large extent.

Trusteeship, Gandhi believed, provides a permanent solution to class-conflict (which bothered the Marxists so much) in a very humane, non-violent and peaceful manner. It changes the whole economic environment thereby the whole social structure, abolishes (and at the same time prevents further) conflicts between the capital and the labour, - 'haves' and 'have-nots' - and avoids all bloody revolutions. The system does not call for dispossessing the wealthy of their possession. Under it, the rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for the personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society.

The trusteeship is primarily a voluntary, rather than a compulsive approach. For the success of the system, honesty on the part of the trustee is assumed. He should make this ideal part of his being to bring about the necessary changes in his personal life. He should reduce his wants to a minimum, bearing in mind the poverty in India. His earnings should be free of dishonesty. The desire for speculation must be renounced. There should be self-restraint exercised in every sphere of his life²⁸.

The theory rests on the premise that human beings are capable of looking beyond self and renounce their privileges for the sake of common good.

Gandhi was very hopeful about the worthiness of his theory of trusteeship, since it has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. Under Indian cultural heritage, the rulers wielded power and dignity of a state as a trustee, for the sake of their subjects, not for their own sake. Rama is held high as an ideal ruler because he sacrificed his conjugal life and family happiness for the sake of providing satisfaction to his subjects; his father Dasharatha gave away his young sons to Biswamitra to free the hermits from the fear of demons; Even Bharata reigned over Ayodhya as Ramachandra's trustee during latter's absence. Coming to the Gita, we find Lord Srikrishna, acting as a charioteer of Arjuna, not to secure pleasure or profit for himself, but discharged his responsibility as a trustee only to see that Arjuna secured his own fulfilment²⁹. Thus Indian philosophy, religion and morals are replete with the idea of trusteeship. No other theory is compatible with non-violence³⁰. In fact 'class-war is foreign to the essential genius of India'³¹. And he believed that his theory will usher in a better socialism and a truer communism the world has yet dreamt of³².

Trusteeship is based on an ideal view of man and society : while we are born equal and have a right to equal opportunity, all men do not have the same capacity. It recognises men's individual differences and the uniquenesses of each. Gandhi was practical enough to realize that although the acquisitive and exploitive nature of capitalists and capitalism are reprehensible and condemnable, capital as a factor of production is essential for the prosperity of the nation. But the accumulation of capital is a science and an art that cannot be mastered by anybody and everybody. Therefore, it is in the nature of things that some will earn more and others less. The talent of a man is not cramped by denying him opportunity to earn more, simply he is to act with a spirit of service as a trustee. The bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the state, just as the income of all earning sons of the father go to the common family fund³³. Thus a little change in the individual's motive and outlook transforms the acquisitive society into the socialistic.

The rule of life, in the ideal society (ie. Ramrajya) of Gandhi's conception, is voluntary bread labour for all with the attitude of service to the society, and no labour will be considered too low or too high³⁴. Bread labour, for Gandhi, was not simply

labour for earning one's bread. He borrowed the term 'Yajna' from the Gita and interpreted it to mean all kinds of manual work or bodily labour or action done through employment of one's limbs. And he differentiated between different types of bodily labour. Hence the physical labour of a lunatic who runs amuck to kill persons or that of a policeman to shoot at the crowd or of a military personnel busy in bombing would not satisfy the bodily labour as conceived by him. Nor would he mean by it the bodily labour of the industrialists or commercialists or the trading community being prompted by profiteering motive.

Under the influence of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Bondaref, on the one hand, and the Bhagavad-Gita and the Bible, on the other, Gandhi took for himself the idea that bread labour should be intimately related to agriculture and all that done for the service of the society. But as a practical idealist, he realized that agriculture, in the present state of things cannot provide employment to all citizens round the year and sufficient bread to all. A person can, therefore, spin or weave, or take up carpentry or smithy, instead of tilling the soil, although agricultural operation remains always the ideal form of bread labour³⁵. Even scavenging was also a bread-labour for Gandhi.

From the above, we should not conclude ~~that~~ Gandhi wanted all persons of his society -- irrespective of their aptitudes and talents -- to become manual labourers. He was, in fact, an ardent champion of division of labour. The social order of his vision was the Hindu Varnasrama dharma. While several social thinkers are critical about it as reactionary, if not revivalist in spirit, Gandhi was appreciative of the system of caste, in the form of Varnasrama dharma, as a rational social division of labour catering to different talents and possibilities of man. It is inherent in human nature. Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science, it being based on man's innate gunas and working capacity and on the moral principle of Karma or Rta. Life is not a rigid identity. It is a unity in difference, hence division of labour or work. Such a division of work provides professional training and skill, social peace and security. It ^{was} the society within the caste-system and joint-families, not the State, that guaranteed and assured subsistence and safety to its members in times of difficulty. Gandhi upheld the social validity of the Varna and asrama order even for our own times. It is an antithesis to all unworthy and heartless competition that kills man's soul. It restricts man's material ambition and defines, in a socially healthy manner, man's

ambition in life and thus increases peace and contentment³⁶. As against the modern way of life, keen on satisfying artificial and ever-growing needs, Gandhi was attracted by the idea of a simple society based upon the stability of needs.

However, Gandhi rejected the present caste-system in its popular and crude sense³⁷, as a perversion of the original Vedic system, in which he reposed faith. Yet, contrary to traditional sanction, he admitted inter-marriage, the right of the individual to choose his or her own life-mate, and pleaded for equal rights of the sexes, but within the recognition of the division of the spheres of work of men and women. He stood against enforced widowhood, while recognizing the grace and dignity of voluntary widowhood. Gandhi did not take the Varnasrama dharma ceremoniously. As a reformer of Hinduism itself, he found no reasons in believing in the existence of untouchables as a separate fifth class (the Panchamas). The scriptures mention only four varnas. The fifth class is only an abortion of the caste-system prevalent in our medieval period. Gandhi classed the so-called untouchables in the class of the sudras and looked upon them as normal human beings envisaged by the varnasrama dharma. The abolition of untouchability is a necessity for restoring the pristine purity of the dharma and is essential to the spiritual growth of the Hindus.

The four divisions are not a ~~vertical~~^r section but a horizontal plane on which all stand on a footing of equality, doing the services assigned to them. In the book of God, the same number of marks are assigned to the Brahmana that has done his task well as to the Bhangi who has done likewise³⁸.

Gandhi's idea was to combine the original caste system and a purified form of it in a right manner. But he viewed the division of labour from the standpoint of ~~caste~~^{duty}, not of right. The four classes of Hindu society 'define duties, they confer no privileges'. All are born to serve God's creation : The duty of a Brahmin is to serve with the help of his knowledge; the Kshatriya with his power of protection; the Vaishya with his commercial ability and Sudra is duty-bound to serve the society with physical labour³⁹. Yet neither is the Brahmin absolved from manual labour nor is the Sudra prevented from acquiring knowledge. Of-course, it is always better for each to confine himself to the performance of the duty for which he is fittest to discharge in virtue of his training and heredity. For, Varnasrama is 'self-restraint and conservation of economy and energy'⁴⁰.

But even being a supporter of the principle of Varnasrama and the hereditary occupation, Gandhi

was liberal enough to allow a traditional profession being abandoned, if it does not suit the qualities and aptitudes of the individual concerned⁴¹. Besides, for him, there cannot be different systems of valuing and rewarding different professions, since all castes are of equal value⁴². "Arrogation of a superior status by any of the varnas over another is a denial of the law⁴³. The Vedic varnasrama was not based on vain social superiority claimed on the basis of birth on a higher caste. It necessarily had reference to callings that were conducive to the welfare of the humanity and to no other. This follows from his firm faith in the Advaita view⁴⁴. Physical work is as respectable as the work of a teacher. Gandhi's teachings here seem to correspond to those in the religious establishments like Mathas, Monasteries, Viharas etc., where no gradation is made between manual, intellectual or artistic workers. And his insistence on physical labour aims at destroying respects for professions on a 'higher or lower' basis.

Gandhi saw labour to be the source of all material values as well as the panacea for effecting socialist transformation in the direction of an egalitarian social order.

"Individuons distinctions of rank would be abolished, when every one without exception acknowledged the obligation of bread-labour"⁴⁵.

At the very root of his doctrine was the notion that the essential task and duty of man was labour and that in the new social order no respect would be paid to any man save in proportion to his service through labour to the community⁴⁶.

Gandhi held that labour is a great leveller of all distinctions⁴⁷. He saw painfully that continuous unemployment has induced in the people a kind of laziness which is most depressing. And we are ourselves more guilty of developing this tamasik quality in us than any external condition. Thus whilst the alien rule is undoubtedly responsible for the growing pauperism of the people, we are more responsible for it⁴⁸. And the only way to eradicate idle parasitism in society is to insist on the performance of honest physical labour. In 1947, Gandhi went as far as to declare that ...

"a simple labourer would easily be a voter, where as a millionaire or a lawyer or a merchant and the like would find it hard, if they did not do some body labour for the state"⁴⁹.

Gandhi was practical enough to understand that 'for the poor the economic is the spiritual. They are incapable of any other thought'⁵⁰. Only God is their bread. And the way of taking before them the message

of God is by taking the message of sacred work before them⁵¹.
Gandhi was all for honest labour. This is his Karmayoga.

He expressed it openly :

"My ahimsa would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way, and if I had the power, I would stop every sadavrata where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and it has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime"⁵².

Gandhi even objected to rationing system, not only because it encourages centralisation of power but also because it adversely affects men's birth-right to honest and free earning. He says :

"The method of rationing of food and clothing is highly injurious to the country"⁵³.

On 16th November 1947, he wrote :

"Controls give rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of black market and to artificial scarcity".

Gandhi considered food control as one of the vicious legacies of the Second World War.

According to Gandhi, the real owner of the land, in the non-violent society, is one who works for the improvement of it i.e. the labourer -- Sabhi Bhumi Gopalki. His view is echoed in the words of Sir Daniel Hamilton, an English capitalist of renown, that it is not a piece of metal, but the labour that is the real capital, and this living capital is inexhaustible.

Edward Bellamy, an American writer, has proposed that every person before he selected his profession, should work as common labourer for three years.

But Gandhi insisted on the equality of wages⁵⁴. If India is to get the royal road to true civilization, happiness and an exemplary life of independence, then bhangis, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others will get the same wages of an honest day's work⁵⁵. His view on equality of wages far transcends the practices in the communist countries where wages are distributed on the basis of "to each according to his work". But Gandhi synthesized this principle with the principle of "to each according to his need". The double criteria of "work" and "need" must be simultaneously followed to determine the eligibility and quantum of wage respectively.

Gandhi, as a romanticist, reposed his faith in man. Hence, he could not deify or glorify the state as the manifestation of the Absolute Mind or spirit. He, in the same tune with Marx, declared the state to be an instrument of violence and oppression. It is originated in violence and is maintained and sustained by violence : "The state represents violence in a concentrated and organised form"⁵⁶. The violence of the individual is prevented but is contained by superior violence of the state.

Gandhi's concept of the state resembles that of Bakunin, the founder of modern Anarchist thought, who said :

"The state is not society, it is only an historical form of it as brutal as it is abstract. It was born historically in all countries of the marriage of violence, rapine, pillage, in a word, war and conquest. It has been from its origin and it remains still at present the divine sanction of brutal force, and triumphant inequality"⁵⁷.

For Gandhi, man, however depraved, is not beyond redemption. His selfish, acquisitive and anti-social tendencies may be curbed under humane treatment⁵⁸. But this is not true of the state. Because :

"The individual has soul but as the state is a soul-less machine it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence"⁵⁹.

Hence Gandhi looked upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress⁶⁰. Hence, like Marx, he had a preference for a 'stateless society' from which police, military, law courts, heavy transport, and centralized production will be absent. But that will come only in future when man will attain complete personal Swaraj and will perform spontaneously all the duties and obligations without help from the state.

For both Gandhi and Thoreau, the existence of a government is superfluous if and when individuals require perfect self-control. In the ideal state everyone is his own ruler and never a hindrance to his neighbour, and there is no question of political power as there is no state⁶¹. There is, then, a state of enlightened anarchy. To Gandhi, political power is not an end, but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary⁶².

But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence, a State with limited functions may be allowed for the time being. Like Thoreau, Gandhi too believed that 'that Government is best which governs the least'. Although he did not consider democracy to be always good, nor autocracy to be always bad, for him the rule of one man over many is not tolerable⁶³. He rejected the divine right of kings to rule and espoused the cause of rule of the people, for the people and by the people⁶⁴.

But Gandhi's democracy (parliamentary or representative government) is not merely in name as

it is in the West. It is superior to totalitarian State, also more moral and truly humanitarian. Under it, the weakest has the same opportunity as the strongest. In it,

"inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race or creed or sex would vanish"⁶⁵.

The only obligation before the State would be that of realizing the greatest good of all rather than the greatest good of the greatest number. And Gandhi believed that such a society could be attained only through non-violence. His respect for possibility, sacredness and freedom of individuals made him advocate decentralization in both economic and political fields.

However, the Gandhian State is not an isolated unit. It must have good relations with other states, following the principle of 'healthy and dignified inter-dependence'⁶⁶.

CRITICAL ESTIMATE

However, critics have found many defects in Gandhi's theory. He has been accused of ignoring many practical questions of life. According to them, Gandhi's total vision and conception of Indian society was much too idealistic and utopian and had no relation to the hard realities of contemporary life in India and the world. Bipin Chandra Pal, at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal in 1919, described Gandhi's scheme to be a 'magic' and not logic. Even Rabindranath Tagore, a great friend and admirer of Gandhi, raised his voice against the basic principles that lay behind Gandhi's policy of non-co-operation and the anti-intellectual attitude and approach of the movement⁶⁷

Gandhi's view that the state is always a machinery for oppression and violence and that exploitation is its cornerstone goes against our idea of the modern Welfare State. 'His concept of power and of the state as a symbol of that power is built on wrong premises, both historically and theoretically. His ideas of self-government are anarchical in the main. Naturally, he could not take a very rational and objective view of the functions of a modern state and government⁶⁸. The popular democracy today is not like its old counterpart

which generally favoured capitalist interests. Democratic governments of today put curbs on the monopolistic and profiteering tendencies of capitalism which work against the public good. Every where there are factory laws and minimum conditions of pay, work, housing etc. In fact, workers are now dominating the States.

Moreover, Gandhi's idea of reducing economic inequalities through voluntary acceptance of trusteeship is unrealistic. He seemed to have underestimated the intensity ^{of} greed in man. Far less he knew the capitalist mentality. Again, Gandhi preached non-possession, yet contradictorily, he gave indirect recognition to private possession of wealth. This follows from his repeatedly quoting the opening verse of the Isopanishad which prohibits anybody's riches.

Besides he allowed talented men to earn more wealth by applying their talents, but he asked them to utilize their wealth for common good, not for their own consumption, but following the precepts of non-possession and voluntary poverty. This seems to be a contradiction, since behind any earning of money or amassing wealth remains the motive of owning propelled by men's instincts of acquisition and ownership. Gandhi's over-emphasis on the avoidance of class-conflicts and the

over-encouragement of class-collaboration, it is said, blunted the edges of his weapons for fighting the existing capitalistic order which he sincerely abhorred. His economic order, based ^{on} the assumption of minimal standards of life and living of men, runs ~~economic~~ counter to human nature itself. All persons cannot become saints. Gandhi's theory is thus too rigoristic for ordinary men. His economic ideas are not based on positive economics, but merely related to a system of values.

Besides, the decentralization of economic power in a developing country like India and of political power when there is no political stability, may prove to be disastrous. Of course, reasonable decentralization of the administration of justice in a big country like ours is essential as it will ~~make~~ the administration of justice prompt and within the reach of common men.

Lastly, granting the possibility of India's becoming a non-violent society of Gandhi's conception she cannot afford to become non-violent right now. She has first to survive. If we want to get flowers from the plants in our garden, we need first of all to put a strong fence to protect them from the beasts⁶⁹. And just following an unconditional principle of non-violence may not do.

The above criticisms appear to be plausible. But these are empirical questions with which Gandhi seemed to be not immediately concerned. Hence to judge Gandhi's view on the face value is to miss its central point. The whole structure of his philosophy was value-oriented. No doubt, Gandhi answered every question -- personal, social or political -- put to him, but he was not found to talk about the future Indian society except in terms of the value-system which he wanted to develop. He had no formulae for any quick solution of the different problems of India. He wanted to revolutionize the whole social structure. And his 'total revolution' knew no short-cuts. Any permanent change, requiring peaceful and non-violent means, cannot be effected overnight. Gandhi insisted on defending human values at each stage of the struggles undertaken by him. Unless individuals or groups embody in themselves the values they profess, there can be no legitimacy for the social change they desire.

To Gandhi, the quality of the elite was as much important as the awakening of the masses. Marxists often unjustifiably accuse him of defending the interests of the propertied class. But there is not a single statement in Gandhi's work where he can be

shown to have defended the right to property in the capitalist sense of the word. Rather, he held that nobody has any right to hold property beyond what is required to satisfy minimum human needs. Again, the communists devoted their attention to the urban proletariat, which was numerically insignificant, thereby by-passing the main revolutionary line. But Gandhi's revolutionary mass line was composed of Harijans -- a class which had not merely economic attributes of the proletariat and sub-proletariat but also the social and cultural attributes that are far more significant in an undifferentiated society⁷⁰. Gandhi was, in fact, trying to find a revolutionary path which was both non-capitalist and non-proletarian. His entire emphasis was on the preservation of human values and avoidance of the alienation of man from man and from his environment⁷¹. While Marx spoke of alienation of man from his work, from the commodities he produces, from consumption of his production, from social organisms and from one another, Gandhi went further and saw man's alienation from nature as well as from his inner-self.

It is wrong to think that Gandhi was away from the realities of life and was opposed to all material progress. But he did reject material progress which collided with progress in other fields which was more durable, more real and more valuable. He said :

"... by real progress we mean moral progress which again is the same thing as the permanent element in us. If, therefore, material progress does not clash with moral progress, it must necessarily advance the latter"⁷².

For Gandhi, economics and economic activities were not distinctly separate from other social disciplines and activities. As he said :

"True economics is the economics of justice. People will be happy in so far as they learn to do justice and be righteous. All else is not only vain but leads to destruction. To teach people to get rich by hook or by crook is to do them an immense harm"⁷³.

Besides, Gandhi's claim for equal distribution should not be confused with crude equality. The real implication of equal distribution is that man shall have the where withal to supply all his natural needs and no more. But to make this ideal a reality we are to make haste slow, since, to bring this ideal into being the entire social order has to be reconstructed⁷⁴.

Again, Gandhi was quite conscious of the positive role of the state. For example, in respect of his trusteeship concept, when it was pointed out that the trustees may not behave like good trustees, he answered by saying that the takeover by the state was the next logical step. He was also conscious of the fact that a government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent because it represents all the people—good as well as bad. As Rao observes :

"The vast majority of us are earth bound and selfish and tend to treat both ability and property as instruments of personal aggrandisement. Under the circumstances any attempt to usher in a socialist society through the mechanism of the principle of trusteeship is not likely to succeed unless it is made a compulsory way of life and such compulsion cannot but rest on force and the formidable apparatus of State machinery which rest ultimately on the sanction of force"⁷⁵.

Hence, Gandhi was not against state-power but insisted on much greater dedication, personal austerity and exemplary behaviour on the part of those who wielded state power. Unless they imbibed in themselves the spirit of sacrifice and austerity they would have no legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. Unlike other anarchists, Gandhi held that 'there are certain things which cannot be done without political power', even though there are numerous other things which do not at all depend upon political power⁷⁶. His whole theory of economic decentralization was designed to bring about a proper distribution of political power. To him distribution of political power was as important as its accumulation. Whatever political institutions Gandhi accepted, he did so only as a transitional device, to be transcended by better ones. No institutional device is final. They must all evolve with the evolution of individuals.

It is a historical fact that high mass consumption ultimately leads to mass destruction through famine, war etc. But Gandhi's view that Nature produces enough for our wants from day-to-day and if everybody takes enough for himself, not more, there will be no pauperism in the world seems to be an impractical proposition. He seemed to be unaware of what is called the "population explosion" that the world is facing today. And his recipe of Brahmacharyya (celibacy) is not likely to command much credence. Gandhi's advocacy of abstinence, prohibition, renunciation and restraint on one's food and drink, his insistence on vegetarianism as a moral way of life, and his almost monkish negation of all creatures comforts, joys and pleasures of life including aesthetic delights, for instance, have created among a large section of our people a negative attitude which has prompted them to summarily discard whatever Gandhi said as something smelling of medieval conservatism, impractical and destructive of modernism. For them, abstinence is unnatural and ugly and the root of many a mental and psychological disorder⁷⁷. Besides, Gandhi's rejection of modern birth-control methods betrays his reactionary attitude.

But Gandhi was neither a reactionary nor was he demanding impossibility. He himself admitted,

"Sex urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. But it meant only for the act of creation. And any other use of it is a sin against God and humanity"⁷⁸.

Gandhi wanted man to cultivate self-control in keeping with his moral nature and the summum bonum of life i.e., salvation. Hence, he stressed control in thought, word and deed and not merely a mechanical control over the process of reproduction⁷⁹. Self-control cannot be expected from one who takes to artificial methods. Birth-control is advocated on the ground that restraint of animal passion is impossible, unnecessary and harmful. But Gandhi considered this to be a negation of all religion, the superstructure of which is self-control⁸⁰.

Marriage is a sacrament in our country. But ^{it} loses its sanctity if it is equated with the satisfaction of the animal passion only. Besides, if satisfaction of sex-urge is considered to ^{be} a duty, then unnatural vice and several other ways of gratification would be commendable⁸¹.

Thus Gandhi's support of celibacy is concerned more with the achievement human ideals than with some empirical problems like population-control, although the former has its effect upon the latter. He believed that only the man who renounces all desires and leads a life of chastity, whether he be married or unmarried, possesses spirituality necessary for true activity-religious, social or any other. Besides, Gandhi

believed in reincarnation as well as in the goal of man's life as redemption (Moksa) i.e. deliverance from rebirth, created by the fetters of the flesh. "Now marriage is a hindrance on the way to the highest goal in so far namely as it draws the bonds of the flesh still tighter. Celibacy on the otherhand is a powerful aid, for it makes it possible for us to lead a life of complete devotion to God"⁸².

Unlike others, Gandhi conceived of society as a spiritual organization of spiritual units. Being opposed to all kinds of deterministic philosophy, he rejected the Marxian view (called 'Historical Materialism') that all our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment. Man is more a maker than a product of history. We have got immense power to change our surroundings. As we are so our environment becomes⁸³. Gandhi wanted an all round transformation of society in the political, economic, social and moral fields to be effected by a radical transformation of the character of the individual, by a process of spiritualizing both men and society. There works behind every civilized society some force, which moves men more deeply than appetities that can be satisfied by goods and services. The structure of society must be such that it keeps a place for the functioning of this spiritual strength. It is the basis of Swaraj. It is inherent in and birth-right of every individual. Everybody and every nation is always ripe for this.

Like Marx, Gandhi was also a revolutionary. But his was a peaceful non-violent revolution. Elimination of violence in the social context implies mental and spiritual changes in man, who in his motivation must free himself from everything that involves physical force and violence⁸⁴. It is through the spiritual and religious power of man that such a transformation of both individual and society is possible.

Though outwardly it seems unrealistic, Gandhi's Trusteeship is consistent with his concept of non-violence and universal love. As has been observed by Dr. Gajendragadkar :

"The great exponent of Ahimsa that he (Gandhi) was, he did not tolerate the idea of the inevitability of class conflict and the indispensability of strikes and lockouts. He thought that if the employers and industrialists treated themselves as trustees, the problem of evolving industrial harmony and making economic justice a reality could be solved non-violently on the strength of the doctrine of love"⁸⁵.

The rationale behind Gandhi's preaching of voluntary trusteeship was his belief that the state by the very nature of things cannot create a society free from violence. If it surpasses capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself. Hence the most non-violent~~ed~~ and peaceful method suggested by Gandhi was to **enable** people themselves to follow trusteeship voluntarily and freely.

Gandhi talked of trusteeship not only with regard to landlords and capitalists but also with regard to everyone who has more of anything - money, talent, physical power etc., - than the common people. Each is to use his talents or profession or strength for himself only to the extent of his need, the rest is to be utilized in the service of the society.

Though Gandhi did not leave behind any model of trusteeship, he stated the basic principles of its organization : (a) Property is a social phenomenon, man cannot claim any right over it. (b) State ownership of property is antithesis to trusteeship as it leads to concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small bureaucracy, based on violence. (c) Trusteeship is by definition a kind of general co-operativization of efforts and resources. (d) It is a system of social self-management, a kind of socialist democracy from below. (e) It is based on Gandhi's theory of labour⁸⁶. Gandhi, unlike Marxists and capitalists looked at work from four angles of vision - physical, economic, ethical and spiritual : (a) Bread-labour is a kind of minimum physical labour which is essential for each individual; It is a source of living without exploitation an instrument of service, and of self-realization.

Gandhi, however, was practical enough to realize that all the wealthy people may not be able to grasp

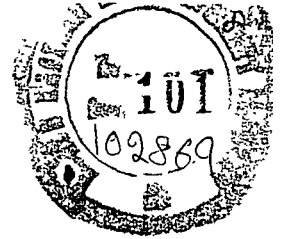
the philosophy of trusteeship and practise it fully in their life. "Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable"⁸⁷.

But it is a lofty ideal worth striving for. Even if perfect trusteeship is unattainable, when attempt is made by those of the possessing classes who have the requisite frame of mind to realize the ideal in their actual behaviour, much of the exploitation and social imbalance will be removed and the world will be a better place to live in.

Again, Gandhi was hopeful that if not all, there are at least some monied persons who are ready to experiment the theory of trusteeship in their own life. In his reply to Pierre Ceresole, the Founder President of the International Voluntary Service, Gandhi said :

"I know a number of friends, who earn and spend for the poor, and who do not regard themselves, as anything but trustees of their wealth"⁸⁸.

Trusteeship is not a makeshift formula either for capital or for labour, or even for both, It is an instrument of socialization of individual and collective savings. It gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself as it is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption. Though it does not exclude legislative regulation of ownership and use of wealth, under the Gandhian economic order the charter of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed⁸⁹. It provides a rational alternative to too much centralization, bureacratization and



dehumanization that are associated with the Marxian type of state socialism⁹⁰. As remarks V.K.R.V. Rao :

"Trusteeship by The individual rather than ownership by the state ... makes for greater measure of personal freedom and individual initiative than is associated with a socialist state of Marxist or statist variety with its bureaucratic proliferation and curbs on individual initiative"⁹¹.

Thus trusteeship, if truly imbibed and rightly implemented will serve as a possible check to both inegalitarianism and totalitarianism thereby providing a new guideline for a new kind of socialism to the world.

There is scope for treating Gandhi's Ramarajya to be an idyllic utopia - an impractical scheme. He wholeheartedly supported the rural civilization as the one ideal for mankind and enjoined upon his followers the obligation of sticking closely to the soil and thus labouring to earn their daily bread. He considered the artificial life of the city and its mechanical contrivances as essentially immoral⁹² and not only objected to the use of machines but went as far as to declare that India should wear no machine-made clothes, whether it comes out of European mills or Indian mills⁹³. Even he considered the medical science to be a kind of black magic and hospitals as instruments of devil. For Gandhi, India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past fifty years. The railways,

telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and such like have to go, and the so called upper classes have to learn to live consciously religiously, and deliberately the simple peasant life, knowing it to be a life giving true happiness. Critics are of opinion that Gandhi's idea of a more less self-sufficient village economy is unrealistic and impossible of attainment in a world of monetary and globally interpenetrating economy, nor was there ever one in any point of history anywhere⁹⁴.

But a little reflection will show that Gandhi's supreme consideration was man. Whatever atrophies man's limbs, whatever retards his oral growth and whatever destroys man's real happiness was detestable for him. He was neither a technophobe nor did he want to go back to primitive form of society. He aspired after a normal moral society, with certain basic norms and mores playing their dominant role, catering to man's salvation. In the peaceful and simple life of the village, he saw his dream reflecting. Village, for Gandhi, was a symbol of a particular kind of community life based on family-feelings or **good neighbourliness**. It stood as a defender of egalitarianism and as a shield against centralization, bureaucratization and dehumanization. Kumarappa rightly says :

"Villagism is nothing but Socialism -- socialism decentralised and freed from violence, for only thus it would seem that the socialist ideal ~~for~~ each for all and all for each can really be attained"⁹⁵.

The developed capitalist world has reached a point of crisis precisely because its massive technological and economic growth has created a gap between this growth on the one hand and the organizational and the value system on the other. Besides, the crisis of pollution of the environment points out the dangers of the destruction of the balance between man and his ecological system. Environmental studies in these countries have recorded a zero growth rate. Contradictorily enough, inspite of technological and industrial progress more people live below the poverty line in the Third World than they did at any time before⁹⁶. Gandhi was convinced that it is the mania for mass production that is responsible for the world crisis⁹⁷.

Even though, ideally, Gandhi wanted to rule out all machinery, as they subordinate man and destroy his originality and creativity, his most humane concern for men made him recognize, in 1924, the use of singer Sewing Machine, while he was still against the use of bicycle and motor car. In 1935, he recognized the need of having printing presses and factories producing surgical instruments⁹⁸. And in drafting the constructive Programme for the Indian National Congress in 1941, he supported the need of nationalizing heavy industries.

"Gandhi's assessment of the worth of an economic system was clearly based upon its effect upon the development of the individual. It was always from the humanistic standpoint that he examined any contrivance whether it was technological or social"⁹⁹.

Gandhi would not lose hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and for labour-saving purposes¹⁰⁰. Machinery to be well-used has to help and ease human effort¹⁰¹. Thus to say that he was opposed to all scientific inventions is far from truth. Gandhi himself was a religious person with a scientific mind. Modern science has two aspects : (a) fundamental and (b) economic or technological. In its fundamental aspect, science has been an educative and liberating force. Gandhi's cultivation of intellectual integrity and his dispassionate enquiry into and search for objective truth, free from the shackles of dogma, which the discipline of science demands, shows how he personified this aspect of science¹⁰². The other aspect he would prize only if it is for the benefit of all¹⁰³.

Gandhi wanted a vertical movement to be manifest everywhere in the society. Developmental stimuli must enable the weakest to grow and act as a 'catalyst' for the 'last man'. By bringing the downtrodden and the poor into a position of reciprocal relation with the rest, Gandhi seemed to have over-turned the social pyramid.

Under such a society the state would be a federation of villages (every village being a self-contained republic). Life will be, not a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom, but an oceanic circle whose centre is the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals never aggressive in their arrogance but even humble, sharing the majority of the oceanic circle of which they are integral unit¹⁰⁴.

Gandhi believed that his direct type of democracy would not result automatically from an economic reorganization of society. Freedom does not necessarily follow from the capture of political power by a party claiming to represent the oppressed and the exploited class. It must commence from the grassroots. The process of change must grow upwards by way of positive realization of the individual and social conscience, and not through the negative stimulus of the fear of annihilation by the exploiters. And reaching this conscience through a process of self-development, is reaching the 'truth' by man. Gandhi was thus the harbinger of a new world of freedom, a new social system, a new pattern of living for man.

Gandhi widened the meaning of the term 'exploitation'. Exploitation is not only economic, but

political and psychological too. It is both societal and individual i.e., exploitation of men by men, of institutions by institutions, of men by institutions, of institutions and systems by individuals, groups and classes. And to end human exploitation, to liberate the individuals from the new type of slavery, to ensure their enjoyment of freedom by blossoming the social values like fellowship liberty etc. Gandhi advocated his decentralized system of economy. N.K. Bose says :

"A decentralised economic system is an integral part of his revolutionary ideal through which, Gandhi hoped that mankind would be ushered into a new order of creative freedom"¹⁰⁵.

Gandhi himself was aware that Ramarajya was only a model to strive for, and not a goal that on earth could be attained :

"Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it"¹⁰⁶.

Yet he hoped that if we try honestly this dream would one day turn out to be true. Many of the developments of the science show what was once impossible later becomes possible¹⁰⁷.

Whatever may be the difficulty in realizing Gandhi's ideal society, his main purpose was

to make man self-conscious, to make people think over their lot, present as well as future. There he was successful. Sarvodaya connotes all-welfare of all-individuals -- their balanced development, and elevation of their moral, spiritual, mental and intellectual stature along with the improvement of their economic status. Since the blossoming of all the graces of man's life¹⁰⁸ was Gandhi's primary concern, he propounded the Ramarajya type of socialistic ideal, which, he believed, would facilitate blossoming of such graces and symbolize human values like freedom, equality, fraternity and fellowship.

Gandhi wanted to build a new cultural inheritance of man, based not only on economic but also on psycho-social equality. The pillars of this socio-cultural reconstruction are : nonviolence, equality, truth and morality. And through transformation of the individual, in the light of these principles, man would free himself from the negative aspects which had appeared throughout the history. And it is the freedom and freeman **that** can usher in a just society¹⁰⁹. He was horrified by seeing that under the cultural and technological imperialism of both the West and the East, Indian mind was completely enslaved. His primary aim was, therefore, to reawaken Indian's pride in his Indianness, in Indian civilization. And 'Swadeshi' was the first and the last message of Gandhi.

Gandhi aspired not merely after the political freedom, but after real freedom, though the former is a condition of the latter. Real swaraj cannot come by the acquisition of authority by a few. It comes only by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when absurd. And it can come when masses are educated to develop a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority¹¹⁰. He admitted that

"the present inequalities are mainly due to people's ignorance. With a growing knowledge of their natural strength the inequalities must disappear"¹¹¹.

Thus, uniquely, Gandhi substituted the ideal of the legal State by that of the Moral State. The truly and deeply spiritual India, the intensely religious India, the India of Dharma and Neeti (morals) were his real admiration¹¹².

Though a champion of the freedom of the individual, Gandhi rejected unrestricted individualism that ignores social obligations. While seeking for individual freedom, one should not forget that man is essentially a social being and that he has arisen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress¹¹³.

This willing submission of individual freedom to social restraint for the sake of the well-being

of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member¹¹⁴. For Gandhi, the true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like wil - O' - the - wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther will they fly¹¹⁵. Society is like a family having close interdependence among its members. And an individual acquires his place in society through his free moral actions.

Gandhi's view comes very close to Max Weber's "democratic individualism" and to the view of Charles Harton Cooley that the individual and society are twin-born and twin-developed. F.W. Blackmar also wrote in 1922 in his Justifiable Individualism : "The only individual that is justifiable is that which is built up in the service of others". He held that if individualism is essential to progress, then socialization of human attitudes is essential to individualism. For Gandhi, service and love are the ways to bring about peaceful yet revolutionary change in society. He wrote in 1940 :

"As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is Ahimsa in his venture. Moreover, if man's mind turns towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness"¹¹⁶.

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CHAPTER : : FIVEMAN-CENTRED PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Gandhi's life-long endeavour was to see man develop as a spiritual being (dedicated to truth and non-violence) within a spiritual society. Even behind his struggle for winning the political freedom for India, lay his primary interest in achieving, for Indians, the real kind of freedom in terms of fundamental values bereft of which, he thought, independence would be an empty slogan. He wanted to regenerate Indian civilization with new hopes and freedom. According to him, human perfection can be achieved only within the context of society, not by withdrawal from it. All these require a proper training of individuals i.e., a right kind of education which caters to the socio-individual development of human personality through the highest possible culture of his body, mind and soul thereby paving path for his self-realization which constitutes the destiny of man.

For Gandhi true education is that which liberates man from all kinds of bondage (Savidya ya Vimuktaye). Yet mukti or moksa, in him, got merged with dharma or duty and social service, performed through the body (Sarira madhyam Khalu dhaxmasadhanam). He thus offered an educational philosophy which was atonce nationalist in setting, idealist in aims and pragmatic

in method all being based upon the physico-psycho-spiritual nature of man. He hoped that with this kind of education men would be led into a heaven of freedom : where the mind is without fear, head is held high, where knowledge is free, where words come out from the depth of truth, where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection and the mind led forward into ever-widening thought and action.

While all educational efforts aim at the highest form of individual development, achievement of his moral and spiritual values and of some sort of social usefulness, Gandhi had some further concrete suggestions for a good and efficient system of education, particularly in Indian context. It must be such that (a) it provides for the quickest possible assuagement of the poverty of India, (b) it creates a productive base in the villages by reviving their productive activities like village industries, craft etc., in view of the fact that most of our poor people live in villages, (c) it removes disparities and conflicts between villages and cities, (d) it produces not merely some men of learning and technocrats for productivity but also caters to the ideal of self-realization i.e., more perfect attainment of truth and non-violence, (e) it provides for some amount of self-activity and its integration with life. In Gandhian approach, ideas and action are inseparable. (f) Higher education must inculcate,

among other things, a national consciousness and meet national necessities. The test of a real kind of education, Gandhi would say, is its capacity to develop self-reliance. (g) Educational institutes must serve as communities linked with other social communities through common endeavours and social achievements¹.

Considering all these, Gandhi advanced his Nai Talim. His ideas about education were the last to be formulated, but not at all the least important. And he himself was aware of their importance, when he said :

"I have given many things to India. But this system of education together with its technique is, I feel, the best of them. I do not think I will have anything better to offer the country"².

Unlike other educationists who laid stress on tools and subjects of studies in the process of education, Gandhi laid emphasis on the development of the personality, the unique moral character of the educand. Literacy, being nothing but stuffing the mind with all kinds of useless information, is not the goal of a real education, nor even its beginning. For Gandhi, an unsophisticated shepherd who is possessed of a spotless character is a much better citizen of the world than the most sophisticated man having a just literary training in a school, True education consists in "an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man--body, mind and spirit"³.

With Adams,⁴ Gandhi believed that education takes place quite informally in the life of a man. But he went further in holding that it begins with the conception itself. With his faith in the progressive rebirth of man, he believed that education does not end in death, and its permanent effect is not confined to this life but is carried to the life beyond. A programme of education should, therefore, be such that it takes full account of this fact and covers the whole of man's existence. Education is for life and through life.

Gandhi was very critical about the existing type of un-Indian, formal, mechanical and bookish education introduced by the foreign-rulers indiscriminately and swallowed by our people unthinkingly. It does not add even an inch to the moral and spiritual height of man. The textbooks deal with things to which our boys and girls are perfect strangers. Money spent on primary education is a waste. What little is taught is soon forgotten and has no value in terms of the villages or cities. Textbooks cannot teach a boy what is right and what is wrong in the home life. He is never taught to have any pride in his surroundings. The higher he goes, the further he is removed from his home, so that at the end of his education he becomes estranged from his surroundings. This education, calculated to wean every Indian from his traditional culture, is an "unmitigated evil"⁵.

Secondly, whatever may be true of other countries, in India at least, where more than 80% people are poor and cannot get even a square meal a day, it is a crime to make education merely literary and to unfit boys and girls for manual work in after life. Our children must, from their infancy, be taught the dignity of such labour. It is a sad thing that our school boys look upon manual labour with disfavour, if not with contempt. This attitude is demoralizing for both the individual and the nation. The absence of vocational training in our system of education has made the educated class most unfit for productive work and harmed them physically. Moreover, in India, we expect, as we must, every boy and girl of schoolgoing age to attend public schools. But we have not the means to finance education in accordance with the existing style, nor are millions of parents able to pay the fees that are at present imposed. Education to be universal must, therefore, be free⁶.

It may be noted here that Gandhi's concept of 'free education' is different from its modern concept. Today, by 'free education' we mean education provided free i.e., totally financed, by the state. To some extent, particularly at higher levels of scientific learning, it is inevitable. But in the name of equality of educational opportunity, we have adopted the most perverse method of

masses financing the education of the financially capable upper classes. For example, the government spends today more than a lakh of rupees in the training of a scientist or an engineer or a doctor, and this money comes from the surplus value generated by the masses. But the irony is that these highly educated classes refuse to go to work for the village masses even when they are well-paid. Gandhi could foresee such a state of affairs. His concept of 'free education' meant, therefore, the provision of maximum support a student can get from his own work experience, both as an instrument of education and as a source of earning. Free education is education which makes man self-reliant, both individually and collectively, and not dependent upon the charity or support of others. Gandhi knew the limits of application of this idea, but he insisted more on principles than on limits⁷.

Finally, the foreign medium has caused brain-fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them ~~crammers~~ and imitators, and unfitted them for original work and thought. The excessive importance given to English has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses, thus standing as an obstruction in the path of diffusion of universal literacy. It has, further, prevented the growth of our vernaculars.

Our love of the English language, in preference to our own mother tongue, has caused a deep

chasm between the educated classes and the masses thus bringing about our social segregation. The masses can make no solid contribution to the construction of Swaraj.

Thus Gandhi found the English system of education most unfit to meet the requirements of the country in any shape and form. It had largely ignored everything India had discovered in its educational experience, such as children integrated with environment, strong pupil-teacher relationships, identity with a people and an appreciation of Indian culture. The most devastating effect was the creation of a new caste, an English-speaking class⁸. Such an unreal and artificial system of education should be replaced forthwith by a new one, suited to the needs and culture of the people of our country, and capable of restoring the national and social continuum disrupted by European imposition.

The new system of education (Nai Talim) introduced by Gandhi is popularly known as the "Basic" education. The term "basic" (derived from the word 'base', meaning 'foundation') has several implications : (a) It implies the basic minimum of learning to be acquired by an average Indian pupil; (b) This education will satisfy the basic needs of human life (e.g., needs for food, clothes, shelter etc); (c) It is correlated with the basic occupation(s) of the community -- a basic craft being the core

of education; (d) It is the basis of our national culture. It relates education to the national needs and problems. Besides, this education is meant for common people, who form the basis or backbone of our nation; (e) This education meets children's basic urges needs i.e., activity or learning by doing; and (f) Lastly, this system is based on the basic ideals of truth and non-violence, which define the dignity and destiny of man as a spiritual and moral being.

The significant features of Gandhi's plan of education may be summarised as :-

1. Free and Compulsory Education for eight years (from the age of 6 to 14), divided into Junior Basic (6 to 11) and Senior Basic (11 to 14), covering all the subjects upto the matriculation standard.

2. All education must be imparted through the medium of the mother-tongue (Gandhi, in his later writings replaced 'mother tongue' by 'provincial language'), and English will not be taught at this stage.

It may be noted that Gandhi was not wholly against learning English as a language and literature. He would not deny that our knowledge of English literature and institutions had enabled us to revolt against some corrupt customs and aspects of Indian life and to make a growing demand for political reform. But he was all against

its use as a medium starting from the primary level. The question of learning a language as a language will come later on, but children should start with mother-tongue and nothing else As it is observed,

"The proper teaching of the mother-tongue is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to speak effectively and to read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people's ideas, emotions and aspirations, and can, therefore, be made a valuable means of social education, whilst also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also, it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child's aesthetic sense and appreciation, and if the proper approach is adopted, the study of literature becomes a source of joy and creative appreciation"⁹.

3. Process of education must centre round some form of manual and productive work in the shape of a craft with due regard to the capacity of children and needs of the locality. The idea was not to teach some handicrafts side by side with liberal education, but the entire education was to be imparted through some vocation or industry¹⁰. Gandhi firmly believed in the physical basis of mental growth, "that the principal means of stimulating the intellect should be manual training"¹¹. But for that purpose the craft chosen¹² must be rich in educational possibilities and should find natural points of correlation with important human activities, and should extend into the whole content of the curriculum. Besides, the craft must be economic to make education self-financing. Productivity is an essential principle of craft.

Many precursors in education before Gandhi (e.g., Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and many traditional Hindu educationists) advocated the system of self-education through self-activity of children. But while for them activity or manual work was an indispensable accompaniment in the educational process, for Gandhi, it was the very centre of education. For him,

"Craft-work is not merely a means of literary education; it is also an end in itself. Unless craft-work is treated as an end in itself, it will lose progressively its economic value, efficiency and significance"¹³.

The argument for education through properly chosen village handicrafts is fundamental from socio-economic as well as from spiritual points of view. It is a corollary of Gandhi's more basic concept of 'bread-labour' -- the pivot of his politico-economic activity. He realized that to put bread-labour into operation, craft-centred education is the starting point -- all educational institutions giving some degree of vocational training at all levels. Of course, the degree of vocationalization (barring a certain absolute minimum for each class) will decline as we move up from lower to higher stages. While at the primary level vocational training is the main instrument, at higher levels it is complementary with other kinds of education.

Through craft and labour, education provides a link with various human activities. Labour, for Gandhi,

is the unifying and integrating factor. It combines the intellectual, the scientific and the physical growth of students.

"Gandhi considered productive manual activity as the perfect medium of education especially between the ages of seven and fourteen"¹⁴

Craft, however, should not be understood in a restricted sense. He suggested that after 14 years of age, children can be given more sophisticated forms of crafts than mere village handicrafts like takli. Thus, medicine, electronics, commerce etc were also kinds of crafts for Gandhi.

4. Again, such education taken as a whole can and must be self-supporting. In fact, self-support is the test of its reality. This has a double meaning in this scheme of education: (a) The acquisition of skill in any craft will make school-education itself self-supporting by enabling the pupil to pay for his tuition through the products of his labour. (b) Besides, it will make every pupil self-supporting (including his economic self-sufficiency, independence of judgement and action, after he has finished his school course.¹⁵

Gandhi insisted on the self-supporting aspect as the only practical solution of the problem of unemployment as well as the only way to carry education to the crores of our children¹⁶. Besides, it saves education

from being perfunctory, cut short at the end of four years, when the children have barely achieved literacy.

5. Gandhi wanted to ~~make~~ education universal and morally uplifting. There was, therefore, no room for religious teaching. In spite of his system being rooted in morals, he never talked of giving moral education in educational institutions. He only advocated the teaching of fundamental and universal ethical ideas. He was aware that ethics, being the distillation of varying, different religious concepts about which grown-ups may differ, is beyond the comprehension of young children.

But Gandhi was no hypocrite like most of our present day politicians and educationists who out right denounce moral education and stress only ~~seenlar~~ education. He wanted to build up foundations which satisfied the preconditions of a moral system, hence his advocacy for the dignity of labour, self-reliance and freedom. He, however, would not grudge religious and moral associations imparting moral and religious instructions to children born to a given belief; but all that should be outside the curriculum and not as a part of it.¹⁷

6. This education, whether it is imparted to children or to adults, to males or to females, must find its way to the homes of the pupils. Gandhi was of the view that side by side with vocational training, children,

"Would be receiving vocal instruction in elementary history, geography, arithmetic ... manners, have object lessons in practical sanitation and hygiene, all of which they would take to their home in which they would become silent revolutionaries"¹⁸.

7. "Since millions of students receiving this education will consider themselves as of the whole of India, they must learn an inter-provincial language. This common inter-provincial speech can only be Hindusthani¹⁹ written in Nagari or Urdu Script. Therefore, people have to master both the Scripts"²⁰.

8. Lastly, Gandhi held that education to be effective must take place in a normal and natural environment in a living, loving, personal relationship between the teacher and the taught. Hence his suggestion was that all learning should be vocal and oral rather than alphabetical to begin with²¹. He looked upon the teacher as one who saves children from the tyranny of words, and he spoke disdainfully of the use of textbooks, especially at the primary level. Besides, there should be no system of examinations at this stage, because it encourages cramming rather than understanding, imitation rather than creativity.

CRITICAL ESTIMATE

Basic education has been often subjected to severe criticisms. Though all of these do not carry equal weight, there are some criticisms which need a careful consideration :

Firstly, Gandhi's craft-centred education, invites forced and unnatural correlation. It is not only difficult but naturally impossible to teach each and every subject through a particular craft.

But the philosophy behind correlation goes deeper. The primary aim of correlation is to make the craft the principal means of relating the child to the villages and the villages to the cities. Correlation is the technique to bind education to the child's life and beyond. In short, it is an attempt to combine hand-culture and mind-culture²² Gandhi at first thought that it would be possible for the teacher to teach everything of every subject through a basic craft²³. But finding the practical difficulty of the method, he later on modified his earlier stand and accepted the position that the knowledge imparted by the craft should be supplemented by other processes. While "during the first year everything should be taught through the takli, in the second year other processes also can be taught side by side"²⁴.

Secondly, Basic education stresses on 'productive, creative and socially valuable work'. Gandhi believed that "every act has its spiritual, economic and social implications. The spirit is not separate"²⁵. But he did not notice that all "productive work" may not necessarily be "creative work". In fact, it is difficult to name work, which shares all these great qualities in the right balance. Again "productive work" is often tiring - it may be even soul-killing. Besides, there are individual differences among children. Naturally all can not become capable of "creative work"²⁶. Gandhi, it seems, interpreted "work" rather narrowly as "manual work". They also work who work with their brains. Organisation too is work, so are reading and writing - in the narrow sense of a "craft"- for the individual in particular and society in general.

This is a wrong reading into Gandhi's intentions. He knew the differences between what is commonly known as 'productive' work and 'creative' work as well as the differences in the capacity among children. What he was primarily interested in was creating a new outlook and a love for physical labour in the minds of Indians. He would never admit that productive work is soul-killing. At the early stage, productive work is creative for children. Since it is performed through freedom, it is a joyful, thrilling and inspiring experience for them. Russell, while believing abstract knowledge to be superior to concrete knowledge, admitted that, "True acquisition of concrete knowledge is pleasant to most children". Gandhi, no doubt, stressed

stressed the performance of manual-work, but he was not blind to the value of brain-work and other kinds of socially and individually useful activities. His approach to education was dynamic rather than static. He said in 1921,

"When normal time is reached and Swaraj is established, one hour may be given to spinning and the rest to literacy learning"²⁷.

Thirdly, some raise the question of unnecessary waste, in the Basic schools, of materials in the hands of young children.

But as Dr. Zakir Hussain, the chairman of the Basic National Education Committee put to C.A.B.E.,

"I would insist on a high standard of work even if I know that all the products of children's craft were eventually to be dumped into the sea. It is striving for perfection, for excellence that educates".

Fourthly, it is a self-contained and lop-sided system. All attention in it is focussed on the Wardha Scheme to the utter neglect of higher education. Gandhi's criticisms of the urban-life, machine-civilization, and his enthusiastic support for the rural life-- all give one the impression that he was against all technical education, intellectual progress and research. But research and technology are vital for the progress and development of a country.

The Zakir Hussain committee seemed to have anticipated this criticism and offered an answer as follows :

"Some people are alarmed because there is no reference in this scheme to secondary or higher education, forgetting that our terms of reference were confined to a seven years' scheme of basic education only, and they are apprehensive that we want to limit the facilities for higher education. We have only to point out that this is a scheme of universal and compulsory basic education for all children, to be followed in due course by higher education for those who are qualified to receive it"²⁸.

Gandhi was no enemy of higher education as such but he was against the intellectual sophistry produced by the westernized higher education. Far from making an educated man better than an uneducated one, it has only created a generation of mindless, soulless and directionless robots called students. Gandhi's patriotic mind could not but be critical about the emerging elite (i.e., the new educated classes) consisting of doctors, teachers, lawyers and technicians who, by already accepting the superiority of European civilization, were acting as collaborationists on the one hand and exploiters of the masses on the other. No doubt, Gandhi's ideas about higher education were not structurally very well-formulated, yet his basic ideas underlie the sphere of higher learning of his conception. His ideas and concepts constitute one composite whole and cannot be separated into watertight compartments.

He looked upon education as one, indivisible and integrated process. His basic education was an amalgam of secondary with primary. He did this in order to ameliorate the condition of our people. And he wanted to leave the responsibility of higher education to private enterprise as a practical suggestion to meet national requirements whether in the various industries, technology or fine arts :

"There would be degree for mechanical and other engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus the Tatas would be expected to run a College for training engineers under the supervision of the state, mill associations would run among them a College for training graduates whom they need. Similarly, for the other industries that may be named. Commerce will have its College. There remains arts, medicine and agriculture. Several private arts Colleges are today self-supporting²⁹.

Besides, Gandhi suggested that the state universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged for examinations³⁰.

Gandhi was far-sighted enough to understand that without having the base (i.e. primary education) well-founded, ~~the~~, the attempt to improve the higher education would be only self-defeating or suicidal. He held that the minimum universal education incorporated in his basic scheme was indispensable for the successful working of democracy in the country. Hence he said,

"... we can postpone the question of higher education for some time, but the problem of primary education cannot be postponed even for a minute"³¹.

Following blindly the western model, India has adopted an entirely self-defeating policy and higher education has already reached at a deadlock. Our educational system has become super-elitist in character, unproductive and ineffective, and personalized in the hand of a small coterie of people. Primary education has remained neglected, secondary a consumption-product and higher education an instrument of elitism.

Our educational system is characterized by wastage and stagnation and a lack of proportion. The higher education unduly gets the lion's share of our educational expenditure compared to that on school education. Besides, the production of technical person- nels is out of proportion with that needed for growth. This is manifest from the growing reserve of millions of educated unemployed. Moreover, the grades of College and university teachers have improved without a similar improvement in the grades of school teachers. This has further widened the income disparities that laid the every basis of the elite structure and cultural enslave- ment³². On the other hand, the rural masses in our country have still remained as much in ignorance as in poverty. Gandhi was against all kinds of polarization --

between the villages and the cities, between those who do physical labour and those engaged in intellectual work, between the elite and the masses, between the haves and the have-nots, and between those who are more educated and those who are not. He hoped that his educational device—

"... will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the villages and thus ... eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity that has poisoned the relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the haves and have-nots and everybody is assured of a living wage and real freedom"³³.

Those who say that the Wardha scheme aims to set back the clock of civilization by sticking to the medieval and ancient form of industries (e.g. spinning, weaving etc) in this age of aeroplanes, television and heavy industries forget that real India lives in her villages. And any scheme of education that ignores the needs and environments of the villages is not only useless but positively harmful. Even if every village is provided with modern amenities like radio, electricity, radio, television and motor-cars, the rural handicrafts must still have their sway in view of their wide educational value.

Gandhi was not opposed to fundamental research and science. But a science or technology which does not serve the interests of the people is useless.

For him, technology must be essentially an instrument of creating equality and eliminating poverty of people. Its indiscriminate use, without the guidance of social consciousness and conscience creates imbalance and retards progress. Hence, in the Gandhian system, technology is not a fundamental determinant^y instead it is determined by the choices made consciously by the society with due consideration of its consumption and production processes.

India of today bears testimony to the truth of Gandhi's vision. We have already established a large number of scientific institutions. But these have taken a super-elitist character and are serving very little purpose. Our technology is widening, without bridging, the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Our whole process of technical education seems to be designed to suit the requirements of a slowly growing, but an increasingly dependent economy. Our technicians are meant only for export. Only targets in our economic field are two : import-substitution and export-promotion. There is no denying that these are useful, but they do not show signs of any autonomous model of economic development for our country. Besides, India's export-promotion measures have created new polarization in the domestic economy, not only between the urban and the rural areas, but also within the urban areas.³⁴ Fifthly, it is said that in Gandhi's

system of education, the claims of girls were ignored. He gave no concrete scheme for women's education.

But to say this, is to forget Gandhi's concern for women. He advocated, co-education of boys and girls upto a certain level, and he spoke about the emancipation of women from the bonds created by evil social customs, ignorance and superstition. His suggestion for their education is however, novel. Gandhi did not want that the enlightened daughters of Bharatmata should ape the manners of the West.

'They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and Indian environment. Theirs must be strong, controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is base and degrading'³⁵.

Besides he opined that education of little boys and girls could be handled more effectively by women than by men and by mothers than by maidens. Gandhi was not unaware of many psychological, moral and social problems connected with the question of co-education in our country. He suggested that co-education, to be successful, must begin with the family first. There boys and girls should grow together freely and naturally. Then only co-education will come of itself³⁶. This is, however, a long-term process and it requires a total change of the whole social set-up.

Sixthly, the scheme is craft-centred, not child-centred. It does not cater to the different tastes, aptitudes and abilities of pupils, who are tied to a specific vocation at a premature age. It may, at best, produce a number of weavers, carpenters and labourers in the country, but does not aim at the education of the whole-man. Besides, too much stress laid on craft minimises the importance of daily time-table. Same kind of activity for hours together makes the course dull and monotonous, cramps the minds of children and makes them fatigued. There is no room for other kinds of activity in the daily routine. Besides, Gandhi did not notice that tinkering with a craft by tyros give neither skill nor knowledge, And in such a case, the very purpose of correlation becomes defeated.

The above criticisms seem to spring from an ignorant conservatism and failure to understand the implication of educational craft - work as distinguished from Artisan craft - work, and resistance to novelty. The value of the activity-method incorporated in the basic system cannot be questioned.

Modern educational thought unanimously commends the idea of educating children through some suitable form of productive work. And Gandhi considered it to be the most effective approach to the problem of

providing an integral all-sided education. The object of his new educational scheme is not primarily the production of craftsman able to practise some craft mechanically, but rather the exploitation for productive purposes of the resources implicit in craft work. This demands that productive work should not only form a part of the school curriculum, but should also inspire the method of teaching all other subjects. Stress should be laid on the principles of co-operative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative and individual responsibility in learning³⁷.

We should not distort Gandhi by concentrating on what were really instruments in his scheme and by forgetting the essence of his ideas. He did not simply want to reduce education to a mere training in vocation. To quote him,

"Basic education is generally interpreted as education through craft. This is true to a certain extent, but this is not the whole truth. The roots of Nai Talim go deeper. It is based on truth and non violence in individual and collective life. Education is that which gives freedom. Untruth and violence lead to bondage and can have no place in education"³⁸.

Kaka Kalekar points out :

"... true education must be given through non-violence; and this is a central idea in Gandhi's educational scheme"³⁹.

Gandhi's theory of education may be seen as a reaction against the old regime of 'board-chalk and talk' and the conception of mass teaching. Yet it is objective and experimental and is based on the nature of man as ^a physical, mental and spiritual being. He felt that education to be real and effective must not be divorced from life's work. In fact we cannot abstain from work so long as we live. The Gita says :

"None can abjure work even for a second. Every body is forced to work, as if in a trance, as per one's natural tendency"⁴⁰.

Man's education must, therefore, be based upon man's nature. Yet the ways of the work are mysterious. One must know the nature, meaning and extent of work :

"Those who can see inaction in action, and action in the very act of inaction, are intelligent amongst men; they are composed as well as accompli-
shers of all work"⁴¹.

A real education makes man capable of doing action in the most appropriate way. True knowledge is something which one experiences and not something of which one merely hears. The ultimate goal of our life should not blind us to the needs and

requirements of our present life. There is no basic defference between different kinds of work only if performed for the purpose of self-development. Work is worship, children's work in the Phoenix Farm included digging pits, lifting loads, cooking, scavenging, shoe-making, carpentry, messenger-work and other physical and mental activities. All-round development, through education, cannot be achieved if any side of human life is left neglected. The whole education must develop the whole man taking the whole of his socio-individual situation into consideration.

Lastly, the scheme appears to make big demands upon the teacher, Gandhi wanted the very best and engergetic of men to act as teachers in the basic schools. A teacher of Nai Talim is expected to have all the qualities of the wiseman described in the second chapter of the Gita⁴². He must do his work with all humplemess and has the least right to be impatient. Gandhi's view is expressed in the words of Zakir Hussain :

"... if we are to create a good social order in our country, it is essential that some of our best men and women, particularly of the younger generation, should give this task (i.e., teaching) their life-long devotion and not run after lucrative jobs in Offices, which is the dominant mood of the present age"⁴³.

Besides, it is psychologically unsound and ignoble on the part of the teacher to depend directly on the income of his pupils for his salary. Gandhi did not speak about improving the socio-economic lot of teachers. As a result, his system has lost all sympathy from the people, and the number of basic schools is on the wane. The few schools, still existing, are peopled by teachers (not best men but the refuges of the society) who have neither knowledge of the philosophy behind the scheme nor ability to serve as teachers.

The above criticisms appear to be plausible. But these are based on a superficial view of Gandhi's main theme. In fact, Gandhi's aim was to raise the status of teachers and emancipate them from the corrupt socio-political and economic rut into which they were groaning. Poverty is of two kinds : lack of money and the despairing sense of personal insignificance. A teacher suffers from both, He is just an educated being engaged in some work. His is an under privileged position in society; he, not belonging to a functionally important social category, is not even respected. Our educational system is ridden by hierarchy : at the top are university teachers and administrators forming the super-elite class while the teacher at the bottom of this ladder is occupying a position worse than that of an unskilled labourer.

Yet too much is expected of him. He is given to entertain the false notion that he is an important member of the society. His cultural position is, thus, a kind of new slavery. His economic poverty is less oppressive to him than the parasitic and irrelevant social structure.

The cultural onslaught of the western educational and value system for all these years has completely subjugated the Indian mind. Although our educational system is individually and socially unimportant, being unproductive, we are not conscious of it..Even we are not given to realize that it should be productive, that there should be a considerable relationship between the inputs and outputs and that it should act and react on the other systems prevalent in society. In the name of the propagation of higher education, useless colleges and universities are being created in order to employ useless teachers and researchers of other universities and to bring out hundreds of useless graduates. This is a given picture showing complete alienation and diffusion of massive ignorance in the name of education.

Gandhi wanted to make the teacher the most respected and the most spiritual man in the society.

He realized that a society cannot grow, nor can it be truly free if its men of learning remain alienated, unfree and dependent for their jobs on the political and economic elite in a situation of great imbalance between demand and supply. And herein lies the value of his suggestion for a free, self-supporting, integrated system of education. Russell stressed the importance of eliminating fear-complex in education :

"... A great many of the defects from which adults suffer are due to preventible mistakes in ~~their~~ education and the most important of these is in the inculcation of fear"⁴⁴.

The teacher must be self-conscious as well as fearless. Through his activities and demonstration, he should make the society aware that his problems are not only his, but are verily social problems, and if need be, he should make these a major political issue. All this will come only if the education system is directly linked with the productive system as suggested by Gandhi. In spite of his being dependent on his pupils, he is free as he is not a parasite in the oppressive and inegalitarian social order, but a harbinger of a silent social revolution.

It may not be out of place to mention here that Gandhi was misunderstood in his view on adult education also. The modern Indian view, following the Western view, of adult education reduces it to the liquidation of illiteracy of those adults. Who missed proper

schooling. But Gandhi's view stems consistently from his 'sarvodaya' as well as his view that 'literacy is in itself no education'. He recognized the fact that there exists a time-lag between the advancement of mental faculties and the development of personality. Accordingly he conceived adult education to be a part of overall nation-building activity in the form of training of all men in filling the inevitable gap between man's earlier training and later requirements in the development of his personality and values.

Gandhi realised fully that in spite of receiving what passes today as 'education', the human mind has a way of remaining uneducated. The ills of mankind today and the serious threats to the future of civilization result from the scarcity not of literate but of really educated men. A truly educated mind is not only a registering mind but an efficient mind. It is more like a crucible than a photographic camera. It views things clearly and objectively. It values emotion, but is not carried off by emotions. It takes an impersonal view of things. It is an adjusted, balanced and balancing mind, and is above conflict. Such a man has principle, persistence, integrity, sense of duty and simplicity. He is progressive, pioneering, and exploring. He is not dogmatic. Bigotry is the negation of education. His mind shows the ability of immersion in and appreciation of the past

tradition, on the one hand, and the ability to improve upon it. Lastly, he is a man of faith.

Gandhi wanted to make a society manned by persons who are not only educated in the accepted sense, but who have^a really educated mind. He wanted to create each man in his sarvodaya samaj a different sort of person who neither has, nor wants, nor bows down before worldly wealth and power, whose joys lies in sacrifice and service instead of pomp and domination; who is content with the little that is necessary for health and happiness and never content so long as the humblest of his fellowman lacks even that, and who is not swayed by the lesser loyalties of nation and community, but guided in all things by reason, justice and truth⁴⁵. For Gandhi real education must meet the claims of body, mind and spirit, hence it has both an immediate and an ultimate aim. The immediate objectives are those that touch our phenomenal life at different points, like vocational efficiency, character building, development of citizenship, liberalising the mind, harmonious development and so on. But in the ultimate sense, education is for the Truth-realization (call it self-realization or salvation) and thereby freeing human person from all manners of servitude. Servitude means slavery both to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. This ultimate aim includes and embraces all the

immediate aims of education. Sir John Adams⁴⁶ held that "self-realization is in itself an all-comprehensive ideal" and all other ideals are really complementary. All the great religions of the world speak of man's alienation from his deeper being. man has a duality in so far as he participates in two worlds - the higher, the divine or free world/ on the one hand, and the lower, the phenomenal, the one in shackles of bondage, on the other hand. This causes man's duhkha. While the Christians speak of the bondage of man as due to his fall from the divinity, the Hindu traces it to ignorance or avidya : "The living beings suffer because ignorance prevents realization in their case"⁴⁷. Therefore, the highest task of man in this life is to liberate his spirit from the bondage of ignorance and to reaffirm his pristine spiritual purity. Education is, therefore, called as 'dvitiyam janmam' -- the initiation into the higher life of the spirit.

Gandhi found no conflict between self-realization and social service, between individual development and social progress. All lives, at bottom, are one. The Truth is deep buried in ourselves, being one with which we are one with the whole world⁴⁸. Our education, to be worthwhile, must move between two poles of the eternal and the temporal, between an awakened conscience and skilled efficiency and physical progress. His theory, therefore, strikes a balance between the individual and the social aims in

education. Gandhi shared with Sir Percy Nunn the view that man's nature is "social as truly as it is self-regarding"⁴⁹. Gandhi's views are echoed in the words of James S. Boss :

"Individuality is of no value and personality is a meaningless term apart from the social environment in which they are developed and made manifest. Self-realization can be achieved only through social service, and social ideals of real value can come into being only through free individuals who have developed valuable individuality. The circle cannot be broken"⁵⁰.

Gandhi saw education as directly related to and concerned with the social issues of the age. He felt that the education of the teeming millions of India, rot in ignorance, superstition and grinding poverty, will be ^a meaningless term unless they were able to satisfy the elementary needs of their life. He was conscious that "the spirit of other-worldliness which ... gained a hold upon the Brahminic schools made them more and more out of the touch with the ordinary world, and helped to make them unfit to mould the Indian people in the paths of progress and general culture"⁵¹. The ideal of self-realization, therefore, presupposes the existence of a social order in which there is peace, plenty (in the Gandhian sense) and prosperity. Gandhi expected the school to become non-violent, cooperative commonwealth, inspired by faith in simple living. If certain ideals and values are essential for raising the quality of life, education must be the agent for encouraging and inculcating them and paving the

way for their implementation. Right knowledge is the root of right action.

We do not deny that there are certain practical difficulties for which Basic system of education could not be universally implemented all over the country, even though our Government tried to make it the national system of our education. Some of these drawbacks have, later on, been rectified also. After all, every scheme has its shortcomings. Yet, it must be reiterated that the soundness of its pattern and philosophy cannot be questioned. C.L. Kapur rightly says :

'In any discussion of Basic education We must weight "claims" against "achievement" and check up "ideas" against "institutions" through which they are sought to be achieved'⁵².

The fundamental principles on which the system stands are, beyond doubt, very worthy. It aims to provide education fit for life, suited to the child's environment and hereditary occupation. It develops his four H's - Head, Heart, Hand and Health. It teaches the child the dignity of labour, the use of leisure hours most profitably, relieves him from the drudgery of purely academic and theoretical instruction, and unfolds his creative personality. According to Cenkner, Basic education is natural, being just an extension of the home as related to child's environment. Gandhi believed in the essential goodness of

every child. Education must, therefore, cater to the natural and progressive growth of both the child and the child's nature⁵³. This system proposes to solve the problem of unemployment and to reconstruct the economic and social life of our country on solid foundations.

Both the Radhakrishnan Commission (1949) and Kothari Commission (1964-66) have eulogised it as a landmark in the history of education in India. With some details of Gandhi's programme of education we may not agree, yet there is no denying the fact that his concept of education inherently, 'is one of the world's great contributions to education.' It has succeeded in bringing into lime-light the drawbacks of the present educational system and has set the people thinking. John Dewey, the famous educationist, described Gandhi's system as "one step ahead of all other systems and is full of immense potentialities"⁵⁴. Saiyidan saw in Gandhi's approach to education 'a spontaneous outgrowth from the soil and not an importation from without' as well as 'certain elements of universal validity which bring it into line with the progressive educational thought of the age'⁵⁵. Hence, it is not desirable that such a system of education which created a national ferment and influenced educational thought and practice in a wider sphere, should be outright discarded simply because it did not produce desired fruits immediately. Considerable time and efforts must be granted

so that it can show good results keeping all the merits of this education in view. 'All right thinking people should put their heads together to see as to how the system can be implemented efficiently'. The Kothari commission has given due consideration to the Basic education in the following words :

"We believe that the essential elements of the system are fundamentally sound, and that with necessary modifications these can form a part of education, not only at the primary stage but at all stages in our national system. These elements are : (1) Productive activity in education; (2) Correlation of the curriculum with the productive activity and the physical and social environment, and (3) intimate contact between the school and the local community".

It will be too much to think that Gandhi's theory of education answers to all the questions which educationists have to face. In fact, he did not himself even claim that, The word 'basic' indicates that the basic education **claims** to form the 'base of our educational edifice', not necessarily the whole of the edifice. His main purpose was to challenge educationists to think realistically in the context of Indian situation and the moral issues which humanity is to deal with. He said as a warning to our countrymen :

"I want you to turn your eyes to what is going on in Europe and if you come to the conclusion that Europe is groaning under the heels of modern civilization, you ... will have to think twice before you can emulate that civilization in our motherland"⁵⁶.

Gandhi wanted to open their eyes to significant problems of life and encourage them to throw overboard a good deal of the lumber which has accumulated in the schools over the centuries.

"Courageous thinking and the readiness to break away from the lure of outmoded tradition are a necessary prelude to wise action - in education as in life"⁵⁷.

Culture, and not material or political power, is the greatest thing about a people. Gandhi realised the eternal values of spirituality, Tapasya, Truth, Sacrifice and peace embedded in our ancient culture and he wanted to invoke them through his theory of education in order to raise India to her spiritual zenith and in the eyes of the world. He believed with Sri Aurovindo that 'a great past must be followed by a great future'⁵⁸. Civilization, however advanced, cannot afford to ignore its best treasures of art and industry inherited from our ancestors. Spirituality, as against the rank materialism of our days, is the keynote of our culture, The Brihadarnayaka Upanisad narrates the story of Maitreyi's refusal of Tājñavalkya's offer of his property. She said : "What shall I do that which cannot make me immortal?"

The history of the Communist rule in Russia teaches us the unforgettable lesson that to attempt to improve the world simply by economic measures is not to reform, but to ruin it. To improve the world means to improve the human nature, and improving human nature consists in awakening man's potentialities for good from the very start of his life. Gandhi believed that human history begins with man's

self-awareness. It develops his specific human qualities, his powers of love, compassion, reason. It develops his specific human qualities, his powers of love, compassion, reason., understanding and mutual assistance, and above all his freedom, hence calls for a right type of education.

There are now two alternatives before mankind: either it has to seek for a spiritual regeneration or to prepare for a wholesale destruction. The Purani Talim has failed to meet demands of our national regeneration and peace and international understanding in a world torn by conflicts and controveriasies. The Nai Talim shows man the path of survival and ushers in a new hope of spiritual regeneration, (^{it}being based on justice, co-operative efforts, productive work, ~~respect~~ for human individuality, fellow-feeling and love).

References and Notes.

1. Sethi : Gandhi Today, Pp. 138-39.
2. Gandhi : The Problem of Education (1949) p.V.
3. Harijan : 31 - 7 - 37.
4. Adams, Sir John : The Evolution of Educational Theory, p. 146.
5. Gandhi : Op. cit, p. 14.
6. Young India : 1 - 9 - 21.
7. Sethi : Op. cit, Pp. 140 - 41.
8. Gandhi : Message to students, P. 5.
9. Educational Reconstruction, p. 115.
10. The ancient Indian education also included some craft as a part of liberal education. Thus unlike the modern westernized system, it was not exclusively theoretical and academic. This is found in the description of the home of a Rigvedic rishi (Rv. ix, 112). (Mookerji : Ancient Indian Education, Prologue XXIX - XXX).
11. Harijan 11 - 9 - 37.
12. Gandhi laid stress on crafts like spinning, weaving, carpentry, agriculture on which stand and thrive our village industry.
13. Kripalani, J.B. : The Latest Fad,
14. Zakir Hussain : Education in the world of Tomorrow, Bombay, 1945, p. 15.
15. Harijan : 2 - 10 - 37.
16. Ibid, 2 - 10 - 37.
17. Sethi : Op. cit, p. 152.
18. Young India, 11 - 7 - 29.
19. Gandhi preferred Hindusthani to English to become the national language of India. Our national language must be such that (a) it is capable of being easily learnt by Government Officials, (b) it is a medium for religious, economic and political intercourse through India, (c) it is a speech of the majority of our people, and (d) it is out of considerations of temporary or passing interest. Hindusthani according to Gandhi, has all these characteristics, while English does not have any.

20. Young India, 2 - 11 - 47.
21. Ibid, 11 - 7 - 29.
22. Senkner : The Hindu personality in Education,
Pp. 109 - 110.
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CONCLUDING APPRAISAL

Gandhi was primarily an action-philosopher. He was not interested in system-building. He wanted progressive transformation of life. His philosophy was largely dynamic, normative, activistic hence practical. Gandhi himself said :

"I am not built for academic writings. Action alone is my domain. What I understand, according to my lights, to be my duty and what comes my way I do"¹.

Prof. Tucci observes :

"Gandhi in his enunciation of Truth and Non-violence had placed greater emphasis on action than on mere intellectual recognition of their values"².

Gandhi's philosophy of action, however, ~~was~~ was built on the deeper urges of man as moral and spiritual being. Pursuit of truth in the individual life can only be the Keystone of enduring creative activity. Besides, whoever seeks to realize truth must be ready to back it up with his life. Romain Rolland says :

"A man's first duty is to be himself, to remain himself even at the cost of his life". Truth, thus viewed, is the only spiritual character for free souls. It is the assertion of the dignity of man and a revolt against

regimentation and passive subordination of life to dogmas, whether social or political or religious³.

Gandhi's philosophy; it may be noted, strikes a mean between the different extreme claims which reminds us of Aristotle's Doctrine of Mean and Buddha's Middle path. He drew upon different ideas from different sources (both oriental and accidental). But he did not accept them as they were. He gave his own interpretation of them before taking them and unhesitatingly rejected whatever he thought repugnant to reason i.e. conscience (which was his highest court of appeal).

Gandhi, a "practical idealist", drew a happy synthesis of what are generally known as the ideal and the actual in life. Truth and Non-violence are the foundations of his philosophy and at the highest level of experience they merge and become one with God. The ideal of reality is also the ideal of value-- a distinctive mark of Hindu philosophy. Hence, God had been referred to by Gandhi as Truth or Love (non-violence in its perfection). Man's ideal of life, self-realization, therefore, was couched in ideal terms

as the realization of 'the Unity of Man and God'⁴. His integral view of man neither ignored the physical needs of men nor the spiritual hunger. Gandhi would have no hesitation to declare with Tagore :

"What we call truth lies in the rational harmony between the subjective and the objective aspects of reality, both of which belong to the super-personal man ... If there be any truth absolutely unvelated to humanity, then for us it is absolutely non-existing"⁵.

Gandhi's philosophy of action, although originated from the Indian milieu of his time has a ^{al}University. Yet the universal element in his philosophy does not appeal to the intellectual spirit of man. And in this regard he is a refreshing contrast to the western humanistic tradtion. Romain Rolladd described him as "a universalist through his religious feeling"⁶. Gandhi's concept of religion, however, was wider. All religions were distilled into a great moral law by him, and he came down from metaphysics to reality, from religions to morals, from Moksa to Dharma. He made his ethics the bridge between traditton and modernization, and transformed ontological truth into existential terms through the instruments of anasakti.

Gandhi viewed man as a unity of body, mind and spirit. He is not merely the body, or the ego, on the reason, or the soul. But a proper and harmonious combination of all these is man, more properly, the

human person⁷. Man's uniqueness lies not in his phenomenal existence (for it belongs to inanimate objects also), not even in his existence and consciousness (because even animals have them), but in his possession of conscience pervading his conscious existence. Conscience is transcendental in character. It has the potentiality of shifting the centre of gravity from the ego to the self, from man to God' and elevates him to the vision of the Good. Our consciousness reveals our transcendental character. It is the person himself who can reveal to himself the deeper and deeper layers of his being and an existence of something (i.e. witness-self) unshared by the subhuman kingdom. Man as a person is thus, essentially a self-transcending being.

Man's uniqueness lies in his fulness.

He is patently one with his body. There is no man without a physical organism. Yet his whole being cannot be expressed or understood entirely in physical terms. Body stands for the sensible, material part of our being, mind for consciousness and intelligence and other physical characters which we share in common with the higher animals, to spirit or reason we owe whatever conceptions we have of supreme ideals (or ultimate values) and our sense of loyalty to them.

If we ignore one of these elements, we falsify the real human nature; we get either a mere animal or God, but not man. The word 'soul' or 'spirit'. however, places man in a distinctively religious context and emphasises his unique characteristics of singularity, freedom and love. Without a universal faith in the sanctity of person, socio-cultural life would be standstill. Democracy treats person's as ends, as absolutes. Only faith in the divine origin of men can vouch for such a view.

Gandhi's view of man reminds us of the Vedic approach to the study of man which neither denies sambhuti (i.e. compounded or psycho-physical organism) nor over-emphasises the asambhuti (uncompounded i.e. self). On the Vedic World-view, the human person, the microcosm, is the representative of the Divine Person, the macrocosm -- the former partaking of the perfection of the latter potentially. All that is wanted of man is to realize his native perfection, his divinity. This is the self-realization or Truth-realization, for Gandhi, This is the destiny of man, and the dignity of man lies in a ceaseless and honest endeavour to achieve his ideal. In the language of Sri Aurovindo :

"Our humanity is the conscious meeting place of the finite and the infinite and to grow more and more towards the Infinite even in this physical birth is our privilege"⁸.

Gandhi shared the Vedic integral view of human life. Man sees, on the one hand, his life as emerging against the background of an initial nothingness, which is the cosmic womb of all beings. This is balanced, on the other side, by the vision of a well-organized universe governed by a supreme Law or Being. Hence he does not remain a passive contemplator of the universe but participates in it to unveil its mystery. He finds his life pulsated with a moral order - Rta, satya or Dharma - which is the basis of harmony of all reality. The principal aim of man, as a moral and spiritual being, in and through fulfilling his obligation, is to maintain the unity of the universe and keep up the mutual relationship that binds God, men and all things in the world of being. Upanisads, therefore, conceive of man, not as a passive on-looker, but as a leading actor in the cosmic drama.

Gandhi was a champion of man's freedom of action. But he believed in Karma and rebirth. One may find an element of inconsistency here. Because the law of Karma, as it stands, appears to be deterministic - inexorable and impossible of evasion. No man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or of his upbringing.⁹ Yet Karma is not a binding. The principle mainly shows the limits, extent and possibilities of human liberty, as well as explains many mysteries of life and serves as a solace to many a distressed heart¹⁰. The law reckons with the material or the context in which each individual is born. The spiritual element in man allows him freedom within the limits of his nature. The cards in the game of life are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to our past karma. But we can ~~ea~~ll as we please, lead what suit we will, and as we play, we gain or lose. The theory of Karma, thus, allows the man the freedom to use the material in the light of his knowledge¹¹. Hence, though Gandhi believed in the Law of Karma, he believed too in human endeavour, and regarded as the summum bonum of life the attainment of salvation through Karma by annihilating its effects by detachment; anasakti or selflessness in action¹². As he said :

"Although I believe in the inexorable law of Karma I am striving to do so many things. Every moment of my life is a strenuous endeavour, which is an attempt to build up more Karma to undo the past and add to the present"¹³.

Thus Gandhi laid stress more on sanciya-
mana (accumulating) or Kariyamana (which is being done) Karma than on sancita (accumulated) or on prarabdha (fructifying) Karma. This explains his emphasis on service and justification for man's participation in the actual process of life.

For Gandhi, as for Buddha, predestination or Karma and freewill are not conflicting, rather are two facts of the same spiritual truth¹⁴. Every action we make depends on what we have come to be at the time, but what we are coming to be at any time depends on the direction and effort of the will¹⁵. Thus, man, though not an absolutely free agent, is not completely a habit-governed creature, a creature of his environment, either. He

"is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief"¹⁶.

Man can, within limits, mould his destiny.

Gandhi said : Gan

"While admitting that man actually lives by habit, I hold it is better for him to live by the exercise of the will"¹⁷.

This shift of emphasis from 'is' to 'ought', from habit to the exercise of will i.e. self-direction gives us a clue to understanding his philosophy of history and his theory of service and conversion of the opponent by peaceful, non-violent means. This is more of an ethical direction for man than an abstract metaphysical theory. / Knowing the extent and limits of his freedom, man should concentrate primarily upon the purity of means. It will show him the right path towards his individual and social goals. End and means are organically related so much so that good ends can never be achieved by bad or evil means, and from good means good ends will obviously result. Again an end or goal is at a distance, being in the future and man has no control over it. What he can adopt and control is the means. Hence he should be immediately concerned with the right-path and its maximum, though not absolute, consistency with the goal. Man as a moral agent should have the courage of conviction -- the

courage to act on what one is convinced of. Moral progress is possible if the purity of means is adopted, since proper end is bound to result from proper means. If promotion of happiness is the whole duty of man, we cannot become careless about the means and violate the laws of morality. The test of one's moral integrity, Gandhi believed, is nonviolence and it is a test of one's genuineness in the pursuit of truth through one's actions in the midst of society. Men can realize their divine-self only through the service of that portion of humanity which is nearest and best known to them.

Men should deserve before they desire. We should perform our duties well in accordance with our "station of life". Brooding over the consequence is not part of our duty. Right is earned by the honest performance of duty. Gandhi's idea of "earned rights" follows from the distinct faculties of man (viz, conscious-divinity, sociability and moral progress) and is equally applicable in all kinds of human activities -- religious, political, economic or educational. Gandhi would reject an economic social order if it was based on exploitation, a political

system if based on a denial of freedom and sovereignty of people, a religion if not based on morality, and education if not imported through means of free self-culture of the educand.

If men are to have a substantial spiritual base, it must find its foundations in the society. Man is both his individual-self and his social-self. So, the same simple set of moral values (e.g., love, selflessness, active service) that guide his individual life, must govern all his social actions. The growth of a man's personality, being inseparable from human activities to change social conditions, is proportionate to his faithful practice of these virtues. The realization of man's total-self is possible only by identifying himself more and more with an ever-increasing circle till it embraces all humanity and even all living beings. And the value and vitality of society, state or any other institution lie in their capacity to foster such growth.

Gandhi's "Ramarajya" offers a total view of human life considered both individually and collectively, as much in social, economic and political affairs as in moral, religious and spiritual.

The ideal before this samaj is sarvodaya (all welfare of all men). Man's relations to man are vital for the peaceful co-existence of man. Mutual co-operation and good-will are the basic conditions of a warm humanity and its growth. Sarvodaya thus presupposes the acceptance of a moral code based on the principles of 'each for all' and 'all for each', the essential purity of means for an end, absolute adherence to truth and love, supremacy of renunciation and sacrifice, cultivation of absolute fearlessness and performance of voluntary breadlabour. The practice of exploitation must be abolished. It is the root of all corruption and social segregation, and is the violation of basic human values of Swaraj (both external and internal freedom), non-violence and equality. But violence and conflict and class-war are not ways that can permanently solve the problem. Gandhi's 'trusteeship' stressed co-ordination and co-operation between the capital and the labour and thereby permanently bridging the long-standing gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The system is expected to perform a double-action : levelling down the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of nation's wealth, on the one hand, and levelling up the semi-

starved, naked millions, on the other¹⁷. Gandhi's Ramarajya -- the ideal egalitarian society -- follows a middle path between the minoritarianism of Ruskin and the majoritarianism of Bentham and Mill.

Sarvodaya, however, is an ideal conception of the purpose of the state and society. As ideal, it is beyond complete realization¹⁸. Yet, human actions cannot be worthy without an ideal, since the dignity of man demands a continuous and increasing attempt towards the approximation of his ideal.

Gandhi looked to education as the most powerful means for creating the new social order of his conception. Only a right type of education can enable man realize his total self-individual as well as social, outer as well as inner.

Gandhi understood that man is the focal point in any system of good education. Hence he stressed in his scheme of education the development of the whole man (body, mind and spirit) and not subjects. Upanisads also speak of education as the realization of man's inner strength and freedom, and not mere academic learning¹⁹. Besides, the human relation, usually

called the fourth R must be given its due priority in education along with the three R's which are widely accepted. This calls for an intimate personal relationship between the teacher and the student. Warm and accepting human relationships help individuals become self-initiated learners. The transformation which take place in a learner as a result of education is compared to genuine religious conversion. This conversion is not merely intellectual, nor is it just the acceptance of a new theory. True education effects a profound change in our style of life and in all our perceptions. By earning for the teacher's salary through the products of his own labour a Basic -school pupil, Gandhi expected, would have the same feeling of responsibility and intimacy of relation towards his teacher as the disciple would have towards his guruⁱⁿ the past. In our ancient "Gurukula" system, the teacher-pupil relation was strengthened by the fulfilment of mutual obligations and duties²⁰. Gandhi painfully noticed that the impersonal outlook prevailing in our schools was hindering education. But teachers are not merely transmitters of second hand information from books, but are concerned human beings who devote their life to the growth of another human being whom they face everyday and hence to the well-being of mankind in general.

Gandhi understood thoroughly well the weakness of our present-day school education in which overemphasis is placed upon the imparting of information on the assumption that it is the end of educational endeavour, thereby making pupils physically, mentally and spiritually maimed. They are trained in unhealthy competition for certificate-getting but never in their total personal growth. Whitehead rightly stressed that "there is only one subject-matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations"²¹.

Gandhi did not consider any part of man's life as unimportant. Life is an integration, a whole. Hence, the remarkable feature of his man-making education is its comprehensiveness, in which the different aspects(chaturvarga) of human life -- knowledge, work, wealth and enjoyment - were given their due place. There is an ancient Indian saying which means : "Happiness lies in totality, not in fragments"²².

As a practical-idealist, Gandhi combined in his scheme of education both the immediate and ultimate aims of man's life, and the philosophical

tendencies of naturalism, pragmatism and idealism, giving, of course, the idealism the fundamental importance, other two being contributory. Besides, his view that education should cater for the ideal of self-realization of man did not minimize the importance of social reality and the day-to-day needs of man. In fact, Self or Truth realization is an all-inclusive process.

There have been many criticisms against Gandhi's craft-centred education. But his firm faith in the Gita-ideal of Karmayoga and in the aphorism stressing the role of physical body as a means towards self-culture (dharmasadhanam) as well as in the gospel, 'work is worship' made him make manual work the central place in his scheme. And we have seen that it is not only philosophically acceptable but also sound from the standpoint of man's psychological, physical, socio-political, economic as well as spiritual needs.

Gandhi had great faith in man as moral agent and his perfectibility. Man is potentially good and divine even though he is manifestly not so very good. Man was the measure of all his activities. This man was neither the economic man of Economics, nor

the average man of statistics, but the common man, the weakest man in his human relations. By his act of faith, he endeavoured to change human nature as well as human attitude to the problems of man. He attempted to spiritualize work and thereby the life of people. His constructive programme for establishing his ideal Swaraj was a comprehensive programme of service on all fronts to meet all human needs. His faith in the basic unity of man led him to believe that the political, economic, social and spiritual aspects of man ~~ga~~ were inter-linked and became spiritualized in the search for truth. Gandhi thus wove ethics into the warp and woof of life²³.

Machines or circumstances that stand as obstacles in the path of man's moral and spiritual growth and his Truth or Selfrealisation were detested by him. Gandhi's humanism aimed at developing in man a positive self-concept and a sensitivity towards others and his environment as the multifarious manifestations of the same reality -- call it God or Truth. And his advocacy of Harijan-seva or service to Daridra-narayana was prompted by his perception of the divine in men.

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