

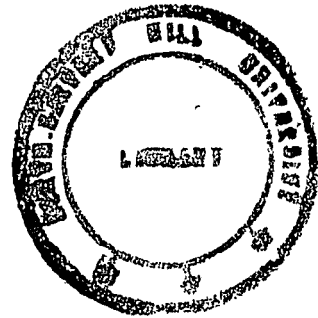
**GANDHI'S
DOCTRINE OF SATYAGRAHA
(A CRITICAL STUDY)**

By

Chakrabarti

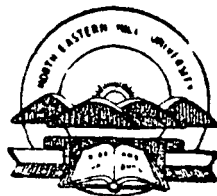
PARIMAL CHAKRAVERTY

Department of Philosophy
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



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CERTIFIED that the subject matter of this Dissertation is the record of work done by Parimal Chakraverty, that the contents of this Dissertation did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody, else, and the Dissertation had not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other University.

In habit and character Parimal Chakraverty is a fit and proper person for the degree of Master of Philosophy (in Philosophy).

SHILLONG

The 10th Nov. 1983



(DR. R.V. VYAS)

Lecturer

Supervisor

Department of Philosophy
North- Eastern Hill University
School of Social Sciences

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Date: 10/11 Nov, 1983

(PARIMAL CHAKRAVERTY)

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Gandhi nurtured a vision of transforming the existing political system and social order. His vision of ideal society was termed as Ram Rajya. Gandhi, no doubt stood for the highest ideals, but he also stood for adopting ideal means to achieve those ideals. In his opinion, there was an inseparable connection between means and ends. He did not even hesitate in expounding that means in some sense should be considered more important as it alone makes it possible to realise ends. Given such a background, Gandhi in order to radically transform the existing political and social order thought of a revolutionary approach. The doctrine of Satyagraha was propounded by Gandhi as a means of bringing up the required social and political change. Construction of theoretical ideals is merely an intellectual task but realising them involves a tremendous challenge of transforming and conducting oneself in this world. Hence Gandhi's doctrine of Satyagraha becomes a central theme of his socio-political thought as it deals with both the aspects of Gandhi's thought i.e. theoretical basis and practical aspects.

Quarter a century has already passed that Gandhi has left us. During this period, some of his contemporaries and close associates did attempt to produce books and articles about him. However, the academicians as well

as political leaders of our age seem to be gradually forgetting him. No one doubts his tremendous success in the field of politics but hardly any attempts are made to find out the reasons for his tremendous success. The best of us as well as Gandhi's own contemporaries and associates ended up by understanding him as a shrewd politician or as a saint. As a politician, it is believed that he was useful to evolve strategies against the British rule. With his death the role he used to play has come to an end. So there is no more use of him or his thoughts. He has nothing to contribute today. Now, it is for the historians to decide his place in Indian history. Those who consider him as a saint believe that he, by his divine or mysterious powers or by cashing the strong religious sentiments of Indian masses, could achieve many things in his life and influence the social and political life of the country. However, religion as generally understood is a private affair and has no role in the domain of politics and society. In this manner, with his passing away, he ceases to be important for us today. Various adjectives have been used to praise him or criticise him such as Mahatma, a charismatic leader, a later day puritan, a reactionary etc. We in India feel more contented after having honoured him with the status of the 'Father of the Nation'. Such is the state of affairs about the most unique personality of our age and a rare one for ages. The fact

that Gandhi has been classed with Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed speaks of his overpowering personality. It was perhaps natural for his contemporaries to have been overwhelmed by his personality. The writings of the most of his contemporaries and close associates will bear witness to it as a great part of their writings is devoted to explain his various deeds. A renowned scientist like Albert Einstein remarked "The moral influence which Gandhi has exercised upon thinking people may be far more durable than would appear likely in our present age, with its exaggerations of brute force we are fortunate that fate has bestowed upon us so luminous a contemporary, a beacon to generations to come". The then British Prime Minister Churchill called him as a 'Naked Fakir'. While E.M. Forster maintained that he is likely to be considered the greatest man of our country, Arnold Toynbee is convinced that he certainly is. In the estimate of Dr. W.H.G. Holmes, Gandhiji is "the greatest Indian since Gautama the Buddha and the greatest man since Jesus Christ".

All these present a strange situation i.e. one really wonders that how his greatness is to be understood and preserved. Surely not only by showering praiseworthy words on him or merely by glorifying some of

his deeds. In my view, his greatness could be understood and preserved only by systematising and conceptualising his thoughts. Only after this, the greatness of his character would be understood. It is here that one realises that intellectuals and thinkers not only of India but throughout the world have considerably failed in doing this task. The greatness of Gandhi should be understood not only by studying what he did during his life time but in his role as the beacon to generations to come. And if this is so the only way left before us is to uncover his thought structure without being prejudiced by his personality. The appealing emotive terms used to describe him have to be forgotten and a dispassionate study of his ideas has to be made. To some extent, one could blame the appellations as responsible for blocking the way for working out the philosophical basis of his thoughts. Gandhi himself disclaimed all appellations and described himself as one.

Who claims only to be a humble searcher after Truth, knows his limitations, makes mistakes, never hesitates to admit them when he makes them and frankly confesses that he, like a scientist, is making experiments about some of the eternal verities of life, but cannot even claim to be a scientist.¹

He even regarded his 'Mahatmaship' as an oppressive burden.² In his

autobiography he emphasised that he was an ordinary person who set before himself seemingly impossible standards to evolve. If at all he has evolved, it is not by any miracle but by self-struggle. And such an evolution is by no means peculiar to him, in the sense that any one who would attempt to achieve this has necessarily a good chance of succeeding if proper methods and ideals are adopted. Thus Gandhi continuously attempted to place him with the most of the common man and we in our term have refused to accept the truth of his statement and keep him away from a large majority of mankind. It would be only appropriate to consider him as an ordinary man who had grown to extraordinary heights primarily because of his ever growing thoughts and corresponding life pattern.

A proper study of his thoughts is to reveal the basis of his greatness. Otherwise, one is likely to end up in a situation in which a famous Christian Missionary Reverence Holmes ended up. He felt that there were really two Gandhis, that the humble humanitarian and Hindu monk was almost overnight transformed into a political revolutionary obsessed with a worldly aim.³ Unless and until his theoretical framework or metaphysical foundations are worked out it will never be possible either to appreciate

or to make a critical estimate of Gandhi's thought and personality. Thus a dispassionate study of Gandhi's thoughts without being prejudiced by high sounding appellations is the first step that is needed.

For the failure of intelligentia to study his ideas, to some extent Gandhi himself can also be held responsible. His utterance such as "I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain",⁴ has misled people to think that perhaps he had nothing to contribute intellectually. All that he intended was that his concern was not merely to propound profound intellectual treatises. He would rather lay more emphasis on the action part of the ideas. This however, does not mean that he has nothing to contribute to the theory. But a misunderstanding of statement has also prevented intellectuals from studying Gandhi's thought seriously. As a matter of fact, while he was in South Africa he had formulated his essential ideas, concepts and doctrines such as Truth, Non-violence, Sarvodaya, Swaraj, Satyagraha etc. During his work in India he devoted most of his time in practicing these ideas. Thus we Indians carry the impression that he was only devoted to action and not to theorising. Added to this, is the fact that he was not a man with attractive academic qualifications or trained in the use of sophisticated philosophical methods.

All these circumstances created the impression that he has no theory or philosophy of his own. Contrary to this, a survey of the literature produced by Gandhi would reveal that he was a tremendous reader and writer. His reading was substantial and wide ranging. Intellectually, he was sensitive to any book that he read. He had his opinions about every book he read, whether it was a book meant for his regular studies or he read it on his own as a matter of general interest. His reading on the one hand covers religious texts like Gita, Bible, Koran and various commentaries on these, on the other, speeches of T.H.Huxley, writings of Carlyle, Plato's Socratic Dialogues, various works in Indian regional languages, Ramayana, Upanishads, Tolstoy and Ruskin. He had a great praise for Tolstoy, because he not only preached but practiced his own ideas. About Ruskin he said that unlike Tolstoy he did not attempt to practice his ideas in daily life. Ruskin "rested content with the expression of ideas".⁵ He also confessed the influence which various books had on him and played some role in shaping his ideas. It will not be an exaggeration to say that his reading on a variety of subject was far more wide ranging than generally realised. He might not be a well trained intellectual as some of his contemporaries were, but there is no doubt that he had the intellectual abilities to go deep into any study and comprehend its vital points. His

contemporaries like Ranade, Tilak, Gokhale, Tagore, and Nehru were genuinely sophisticated intellectuals. However in comparison to Gandhi they were lacking in critical attitude to various problems. The fact that Gandhi could continue to have sustained debates throughout his life on various problems and could maintain his own point of view with these people speaks of his caliber as an intellectual or an original thinker. Among his contemporaries people like Subhas Bose and M.N. Roy were intellectually gifted but instead of developing their own point of view they succumb to the temptations of adopting some popular western 'isms'. One can say that perhaps in India during the pre-independence period there was no such intellectual or political leader who understood both Indian and Western tradition with such a great depth as much as Gandhi did. This also speaks of intellectual and rational capabilities. An erudite Gandhian Scholar Dr. Zakir Hussain maintained that Gandhi was "one of the most rational thinkers I have come across".⁶ Mr. J.J. Doke remarked that "A strong natural tendency in analytical study made him question the why of everything".⁷ Gandhi did not mind even taking a deep dip in purely philosophical issue such as the concept and limits of reason. In his epistemological quest he disagreed with the standard doctrines like empiricism and rationalism and placed 'faith' at the highest level.

His distrust for reason was total. He said, "The heart accepts a conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds the reasoning. Argument follows conviction. Man often finds reasons in support of whatever he does or wants to do."⁸ All that I have tried so far is that Gandhi's writings and personality were deeply rooted in a firm understanding and commitment to certain standards which are defended and supported vigorously within an intellectual framework. In philosophical jargon, one can say that Gandhian thought has solid metaphysical foundations. As long as this remains uncovered Gandhi would always remain a mystery to us. Regarding the nature of his metaphysical foundation we get a clue in his auto-biography. There he says:

What I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years- is self realisation, to see god face to face to attain Moksa. I live and move and have my pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and working and all my ventures in the political field are directed to the same end...These are clearly incommunicable...But these are spiritual rather moral... for the essence of religion is morality.⁹

Gandhi claims that he has been all along working and doing everything with the aim of seeing God face to face or what is called self-realization. Thus underlying his prolonged activities and thinking, there must be existing some unifying thread. Our task ought to be to attempt and uncover the same.

Rolland maintained that nothing of Gandhi could be understood in depth as long as we fail to bring out the vast religious spirit underlying the edifice of his moral and political thought. However, the task of clearly bringing out the metaphysical presuppositions is not an easy one. It would require from us to be completely free from all sorts of prejudices. It would also perhaps require us to transcend all available intellectual frameworks. In other words no coloured visions are needed to study Gandhi. Gandhi is so deeply rooted in classical Indian thinking that any attempt to understand his thoughts through Western intellectual schemes is bound to be a failure. Lala Rajpat Rai when spoke as follows, he did not speak only for his generation but perhaps also for future generations attempting to understand Gandhi.

They suspect him of some deep design. He fears no one and frightens no one... He recognizes no conventions except such as are absolutely necessary not to remove him from the society of men and women. He recognizes no masters and no gurus. He claims no chelas though he has many... He owns no property, keeps no bank account, makes no investments, yet, makes no fuss about asking for anything he needs. Such of his countrymen as have drunk deep from the fountains of European history and European politics and who have developed a deep love for European manners and European culture, neither understand nor like him. In their eyes he is a barbarian, a visionary, and a dreamer. He has probably something of all these qualities because he is nearest to verities of life and can look at things with plain eyes, without the glasses of civilization and sophistry.¹⁰

Following the insight of Lala Lajpat Rai the best method of attempting to understand Gandhi is to place him in the religio-cultural background of ancient India. The fact that he vehemently rejected Western culture and asserted the supremacy of ideas contained in Gita and Upanishads also confirm this view. Of course, within the Indian tradition there are divergent views and controversies. Gandhi fully participated in them and accepted some and rejected other ones. Thus one might say that his metaphysical presuppositions are drawn largely from Indian studies. However, he developed his own unique ethical standpoint on the basis of those presuppositions. Hence Gandhi's practices and actions could never be completely comprehended without examining this metaphysical basis.

In this limited work i.e. of preparing M.Phil. dissertation, it would not be possible for me to take up an exhaustive study of Gandhian thought, on the line suggested above. However, I have chosen one of the most central problems of Gandhi's thought, i.e. The Doctrine of Satyagraha. My preference for this problem is based on two considerations (i) that the study of the doctrine would necessitate a sound grasp of metaphysical foundations of Gandhi's thought. In other words, it would be required to devote myself to the task of understanding his theoretical basis, (ii)

Satyagraha is a doctrine which no doubt has theoretical roots but also has a great practical significance. Gandhi is known to the world of common man as a great person only on the basis of his several practices of Satyagraha, is one such doctrine propounded by Gandhi which combines both theory and practice. Consequently, a study of this doctrine would enable me to explain, examine and evaluate both Gandhi's theory and practice.

I shall begin my study by examining the two most fundamental concepts i.e. Truth and Non-violence; as Satyagraha is firmly rooted in these. Needless to say that while studying these, a major attention will be paid to highlight the fact that these notions are rooted deeply in Indian tradition. Having done so, I shall proceed to explain and illustrate the nature of Satyagraha. While doing so I shall explain and examine the following:

1. Requirements or the pre-conditions of Satyagraha.
2. Rules of Satyagraha.
3. Qualifications of Satyagraha.
4. Satyagraha Vs. Compulsion.
5. Domestic Satyagraha.
6. Individual Satyagraha and Mass Satyagraha.

7. Limits and ~~abuse~~ of Satyagraha.

8. Satyagraha in Democracy.

After having ~~ing~~ done so I shall proceed to compare and contrast Satyagraha with other methods such as Civil disobedience, Non-cooperation, passive resistance etc. Along with this, in this section I shall also try to examine the efficacy and desirability of adopting Satyagraha as a means to achieve higher ends on the one hand and bringing about a radical change on the other in a given social and political system. In the last ~~Chapter~~, I will examine and deal with the various objections and criticisms made against this doctrine. Finally, an assessment of the whole doctrine of Satyagraha would be made.

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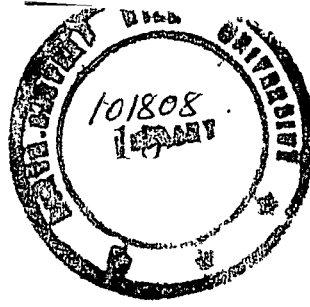
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CHAPTER - II

THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH

The concepts of Truth and Non-violence lie at the heart of Gandhi's conceptual framework. As long as these concepts are not properly understood it will not be possible to comprehend and analyse the doctrine of satyagraha. It is only when Truth and Non-violence are woven together we get the doctrine of satyagraha. Similarly, it is the ability to practice truth and non-violence that makes a man successful satyagrahi. Hence any discussion on the doctrine of satyagraha has to be preceded by a discussion, clarification and elucidation of the concepts of truth and non-violence. In this chapter I propose to concentrate on the concept of truth. Subsequent to this I shall devote myself to the concept of non-violence.

Gandhi accorded the highest place to the concept of truth in his moral and political thinking. Rather truth in his view has to be the basis of all possible thoughts and practices. Human life has several dimensions such as social, political, economic and religious etc. Different thinkers have argued about the relative or absolute importance of one of the aspects over the other, i.e. the one determining or largely influencing the other aspects. For instance, whereas in Marx's thought it is economics



which plays the key role, for Hobbes, Rousseau and Machiavelli it is the socio-political principle which are primary. In Christian tradition the religion has a primary role. Gandhi, however, disagreed with all these approaches and presented a radically different alternative. He attempted to establish that the principle of Truth should be considered as underlying and regulating every aspect of human life. Thus all the aspects i.e., socio-political, religious and moral have to be properly balanced and integrated keeping the concept of truth at the centre. Thus he gives the status of a sovereign to the principle of truth. He says "For me truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles".¹ Truth is not only a sovereign principle but also an eternal principle. What is meant by saying it as eternal is that for its existence truth is not dependent on anything else. It is a self-sustaining principle. It is the law of the universe. Hence everything that happens in the universe is being regulated, according to Gandhi, by the eternal Principle of truth.

Gandhi's concept of truth is not a novel concept, as it is deeply embedded in the Hindu-Buddhistic thought. Many prophets of different religions have also accepted and pleaded for the superiority of truth. For example, in Sikh teaching

Truth and falsehood stand to one another in the relation of a stone to an earthen vessel. If a stone be thrown at an earthen vessel, the latter will break. In either case it is the earthen vessel that suffereth.²

Kabir says,

No act of devotion can equal truth, no crime is so heinous as falsehood; in the heart where truth abides, there is my abode.*

However, the truth acquires a unique character in Gandhian thought largely due to Gandhi's interpretation of truth as an integrating and regulating principle of the day to day affairs of human life. Thus the moral and political thinking which Gandhi evolved on the principle of truth enabled him to offer radically different views and methods of solving the problems faced by mankind today.

Truth in Sanskrit means 'Sat', which in turn means "being existing" or 'ever existent'. The Hindi equivalent of truth i.e. 'Satya' which is a derivative of the Sanskrit term 'Sat'. Satya also means 'real', 'ever^{is}present', 'actual' etc. However, one could raise questions about the nature of truth

* Sānchā Barābar Tāpa Nahi
Jhuthā Barābar Pāpa.
Jāke Hirdeya Sānchā he
Tāke Hirdeya Aāp.

which is so highly valued by Gandhi. Truth has not been a concern of Gandhi or Indian Philosophers alone but even Western Philosophers have also offered various theories in order to expound the nature of truth. Most prominent among them are correspondence, Coherence and pragmatic theories of truth. Correspondence theorists of truth have argued that truth is a relation between facts and propositions. A proposition, according to the correspondence theory, is said to be true if and only if it corresponds with the fact/facts it asserts. "Thus 'true' can relate to a conformity, correspondence or agreement between belief and its verbal expression or between a belief and the facts to which it relates".³ Unlike Correspondence theory, the coherence theory considers the idea of truth as a relation between a set of propositions. Truth for them is determined by the extent one proposition coheres with the other ones in a given set. A proposition is true if it coheres with other proposition of the set. Thus truth becomes dependent to the extent one proposition coheres with the other propositions of the same set.* It will lead as to the idea that truth is a matter of

* "According to the coherence Theory, to say that a statement (usually called a judgement) is true or false is to say that it coheres or fails to cohere with a system of other statements; that it is a member of system whose elements are related to each other by ties of logical implications". The Encyclopedia of Philosophy Vol. I & 2, 1967, p.30 (Editor-in-Chief), Edwards, Paul.

degree of coherence. In any case both correspondence and coherence theories limit the domain of truth to propositions. Truth is a property of propositions. Their concept of truth has nothing to do with various human situations. Gandhi's notion of truth, however, radically differs from both correspondence and coherence theories. In his thinking truth is a value concept. It is impossible to think about truth as a value concept outside human situations. Gandhi's truth is intended as a guiding/regulative principle of human life in general.

The pragmatic theory of truth has apparent resemblance with Gandhi's concept of truth. Both Gandhi and pragmatists consider truth as a matter of practice. Pragmatic theories of truth are best understood in the light of Charles S. Peirce's declaration,

There is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.⁴

According to the pragmatists truth is that which works well in practice.

In other words, truth for them has only instrumental value. However, truth in their thinking is not a value-centric concept. It has nothing to do with morals in human life. Moral code of conduct is neither accepted

nor rejected on the principle of truth.

Gandhi in this regard significantly differs from pragmatists. Truth to him, is the highest human end. Its essence is morality. Hence the active moral pattern of life has to be determined by our understanding of the nature of truth. Since truth is sovereign and eternal principle, morality in Gandhi's thinking also acquires a sovereign status i.e. all other aspects of human life have to be regulated and organised in accordance with the moral principle of truth.

This puts Gandhi's idea of truth clearly in the background of the Hindu-Buddhistic tradition. In this tradition, moral considerations have been given supreme place in human affairs. It can be seen clearly by the importance of the concept *Rta* and *Dharma* in Indian tradition. The concept of *Rta* is mainly found in the vedic literature where it is formulated as an eternal law maintaining the orderliness in the universe. Human society and the problems of human beings have to be seen in the context of eternal principle of the universe i.e. *Rta*. *Rta* was supposed to be a principle harmonising the world order and attempts to live according to it would lead to moral perfection of individual as well as of society.

Thus it is seen as basically a moral principle in nature. Dr. Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore share the opinion that Ṛta "provides the standard of morality. Ṛta represents the orderliness and eternal law of the universe. Here Ṛta stands for the principle of human conduct. Orderly and consistent conduct is the essential feature of the good life. Disorder often represented, in the form of a falsehood, is the greatest evil. Virtue is conforming to the cosmic order".⁵ They also opined that "Ṛta represents the law, unity, or righteousness underlying the orderliness of the universe".⁶

The vedic concept of Ṛta served as a basis for development of ethical concepts in the post-vedic period. The concept of dharma was evolved as a main ethical category in the post vedic period. Dharma, in its significance in Indian tradition, was and even now happens to be on par with the Vedic concept of Ṛta. Dharma is considered as one of the most important Purushārthas by almost all systems of philosophy as well as by Purānic literature. Although different thinkers have interpreted the concept of dharma differently, yet all of them have no doubt about the moral character and Supreme status of dharma in the context of Indian tradition. Prof. Hiriyanna maintained that dharma is moral value which works as a regulative principle. He says, "...we have rendered the term as 'moral value'.⁷

He also says, "The conception of dharma as a regulative principle is so important in the philosophy of conduct that all the Shāstras and all the higher literature of India... emphasize it".⁸ Dr. Radhakrishnan explains dharma as that principle which not only sustains universe but also always lies under all virtuous things and deeds. He maintained that "It is the norm which sustains the universe, the principle of thing in virtue it is what it is".⁹ Shri Aurobindo understood the concept of dharma in a slightly different manner than Hiriyanna and Radhakrishnan. According to him dharma means -

- (a) The fundamental law of our being
- (b) The law of divine within us and
- (c) The ideal pattern of social relations which enables each being to realise its divine capacity.

Thus almost all contemporary thinkers agree about the moral character of dharma.

The fact that Gandhi sometimes uses truth and dharma interchangeably gives us a clue to understand Gandhi's notion of truth in the light of the concept of dharma as enunciated in Indian Philosophy. Like dharma truth is not only a supreme principle but moral principle too. Consequently,

Gandhi declared that truth is the substance of morality. He said,

But one thing took deep root in me the conviction that morality is the basis of things, and truth is the substance of all morality. Truth becomes my sole objective.¹⁰

Thus considering morality as the basis of everything Gandhi made out a case for maintaining that all other values have to be subservient to the higher value i.e. truth. In other words, there ought not to be anything in the life of an individual or in the practices of a given society, which could come in conflict with the principle of truth.

The moral growth or decline of an individual or society is to be measured by examining their adherence to the principle of truth. Thus truth in this sense is an absolute principle, to be called as Parmārtha Satya. As I have stated earlier truth as understood by Gandhi has its roots in the Sanskrit term Sat. Sat means absolute reality which is all pervading and everything else in this universe is illusory. Thus 'Sat' refers to a non-dualistic existence. Gandhi's thinking in this sense resembles to Sankara's doctrine of non-dualism, or advaitism. He did agree that to some extent he is an Advaitin. He said,

I believe in Advaita (non-dualism),
I believe in the essential unity of
man and for that matter all that
lives...¹¹

However, in another sense he claims that he is an Anekantavādi. He differs from Sankara's system in this sense that he does not take the world of experience to be unreal in the sense of being illusory or non-existent. However, it is different from the principle of truth or sat because of its important character. There is nothing constant in the world of experience. Things are changing in every moment. But they nevertheless exist.*

Gandhi, although initially believed that God is Truth because in his opinion God is the ultimate reality. However, he gradually shifted his emphasis from God is Truth to Truth is God. It was done with the intention of offering a proper and consistent definition of his view of religion. He said:

I often describe my religion as Religion of Truth. Of late, instead of saying God is Truth, I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my religion.¹²

This change in emphasis i.e. from God is truth to Truth is God has attracted the attention of some of the Gandhian Scholars. N.K.Bose understood the

* I am Advaitist and yet I can support Dvaitism (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real. Gandhi M.K., Truth is God, Prabhu R.K.(compiled), 1955, p.11.

shift as resulting into a liberal outlook. He observes-

By enthroning Truth on the highest pedestal, Gandhi thus truly became a Catholic, and lost all trace of separateness from every other honest man who worshipped Gods other than his own*.¹³

Professional Philosophers like P.T. Raju has found a Philosophical soundness in the expression Truth is God than in the expression God is Truth. He says:

In the Judgement 'God is Truth', the existence of God is presupposed. But this existence may be questioned, when the predicate, Truth, would have to be referred to a non-existent subject, and the judgement would be without logical significance. But none questions that there is truth in the universe. When it is said that God is the same as that Truth, the judgement becomes significant and practically amounts to the proof of God.¹⁴

Apart from developing a liberal outlook and sound logical basis for his thinking, the expression provided Gandhi with a good strategy for his practices. The expression God is Truth would evoke unfavourable response from agnostics and atheists. Perhaps agnostics and atheists are generally so obsessed with the idea of God that they do not want to know anything when there is an assertion of the fact that there is a God. Gandhi with his liberal and humanistic outlook could not have accepted a situation where one section of human society is left out from coming closer to the eternal principle of the universe. Gandhi's identification of Truth with God helped him to draw

the attention of all i.e. theists, agnostics and atheists. Atheists and Agnostics might not be God fearing persons but no doubt they are truth fearing persons. In this sense once Gandhi suggested that Charles Bradlough, who delighted to call himself an atheist is actually a theist in practice in the sense that he accepts the practices of high moral ideals in life. Thus Gandhi said, "I would call him God fearing person".¹⁵ In this way Gandhi maintained that God is atheism of atheist. Charles Bradlough would not react unfavourably if he is described as a truth fearing person. For Gandhi it amounts to be a God fearing person. Hence he first considered truth as a higher moral value and then argued that it is a law of the universe. Needless to mention that both agnostics and atheists are not opposed to accept the vital role morality plays in life. Thus giving truth the same status as a particular religion would give to the concept of God, Gandhi not only on the one hand, incorporated the idea of God in his system but also on the other succeeded in attracting the non-believers. In the process he rendered the notion of God also as a something morally perfect. In this sense, as the truth is a moral law God is also a moral law. However, one might ask here the question i.e. who is the law giver? In response to this question he maintained that "Law and Law giver are one".¹⁶

In other words, he asserted the supremacy of Moral Law by calling it sometimes truth and some other times God. Truth being the basic reality all that happens in ~~world~~ ^{universe} have to be related to the concept of truth. Even if it is all conflicting and different in appearance. Truth is the unifying substratum of everything Gandhi said,

Truth means existence; the existence of that we know and of that we do not know. The sum-total of all existence is absolute truth or the Truth. The concepts of truth may differ. But all admit and respect truth. That truth I call God.¹⁷

Gandhi's idea of Truth or God seems to be close to the idea of Nirguna Brahman of Indian Philosophy. Because truth is the law and laws are not persons. Thus Truth or God is an impersonal Principle. However, one might raise the question i.e. does Gandhi accept something on par with personal God i.e. Isvar or Saguna Brahman ? When Gandhi speaks of Truth as God then he is actually referring to the eternal principle only. But Gandhi also claims to believe in 'Avatāras' and 'Idol Worship'.^{*} Thus he is also seen to believe in personal God. A personal God is one who can imbibe the eternal moral principle (i.e. Truth) in himself to a possible maximum

* I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu Scriptures, and therefore in avatars and rebirth. Gandhi, M.K., Hindu Dharma, 1978, p.9.

extent. Truth is the eternal principle and aim of human being is to imbibe this principle in their lives. The manifestation of the principle of Truth in one's life renders him as a God or Avatāra. In other words, the so called personal Gods or Avatāras are actually presenting a higher manifestation of the principle of the truth than obtained in a given society. Thus on the one hand he accepted the absolute truth or "paramārtha Satya" as an impersonal law and on the other hand by accepting the idea of personal God he found out the way of leading life in accordance with that impersonal law. But one might question the basis for a belief in the existence of principle like Truth. As philosophers have attempted to advance arguments to prove the existence of God, it is also necessary that there should be some arguments in support of Gandhi's belief that there is an eternal Moral Law to be called as Truth or God. It is perhaps the necessity of rational thinking that we have some arguments to support such a belief. Such queries are more natural with philosophers as they claim rational enquiries to be their domain. Here also Gandhi differs with the generally accepted Philosophical approach. The belief in the sovereignty of truth is a matter of faith with Gandhi. In this opinion this faith can never be proved or disproved by the aid of reason. Rather what he means is that reason is just

not capable of contributing anything to the proving or disproving of such a faith. This is not the weakness or unsoundness of the faith but it is the limitation of reason. In his opinion, faith transcends or falls outside the area of reason. In 1928 he said that "I confess...that I have no argument to convince...through reason. Faith, transcends reason".¹⁸ Faith he considers to be a kind of "Sixth Sense".¹⁹ which works in all the cases which are outside the purview of reason, elsewhere he clearly asserted that reason is powerless to display that truth is God. But it is the faith alone which can convince one about identity of truth and God. However, this should not lead one to conclude that faith is something unreasonable. Anything falling outside the purview of reason is not necessarily unreasonable. The term unreasonable means something contrary to the demands of reason and, what is outside the purview of reason is not to be equated with something contrary to the reason. Thus in Gandhi's thinking reason is not something absolute, it has its limited role to play. The belief in the ultimate moral principle i.e. Truth/God is one such thing which is outside the domain of reason. Hence any attempts to establish the existence of Truth or God by means of rational arguments is bound to fail. Moreover, this is also

possible that reason could be misused. A lunatic can also be said to be having reasoning ability and actually reasoning in his affairs, still he is described as a lunatic, because, in this case his reason is actually misused. "Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, reason misused becomes lunacy".²⁰ Finally one can say that the rationalists claim that reason is applicable in all aspects and endeavours of human beings is a philosophically unsound claim. Gandhi says:

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone believing it to be God. I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason.²¹

Not only the rationalistic method but even empirical method of obtaining truth was not acceptable to Gandhi. As he doubted the absolute character of reason in the same manner he also doubted the absolute character of empirical knowledge. "Sense perceptions can be, and often are, false and deceptive, however, real they may appear to us. Where there is a realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within".²² Implicit in the

above passage is the idea generally described in technical philosophical vocabulary as ^{induction.} ~~inductive~~ knowledge is always probable knowledge. The concept of probability is enough to explain the limited role of sense experience. Thus Gandhi favoured neither rationalism nor empiricism for obtaining the knowledge of truth.

However, one may still wonder what actually is meant by faith. Well, it is rather difficult to speak about it. All that one can say is that faith does not contradict reason, it is a kind of sixth sense. Faith is in fact the presence of the eternal principle in each individual. The presence may be felt by different people in different degrees and on different occasions. But its existence is never completely ruled out. It becomes evident in the overall conduct of the individuals. Gandhi says,

It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches.²³

Gandhiji further said,

Without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.²⁴

Gandhi speaks of two types of truth i.e. absolute truth and relative truth. The absolute truth, in his scheme of thought, is equated with God/Truth. The absolute truth is incomprehensible in its fullness with the help of reason or sense experience. It is something which can be felt by heart.

There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it though I do not see it. It is the unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.²⁵

The absolute truth being infinite, can never be known in its fullness. The possibility of obtaining its full knowledge will run contrary to its being infinite.

It is impossible rather logically impossible for a human being to know absolute truth in its entirety because man has its own limitations. The limitless cannot be grasped fully by a limited one. Thus absolute truth, although as a matter of fact exists, yet its existence cannot be ascertained by rational or empirical methods. Thus what is available to man in the form of knowledge of truth has to be a relative knowledge of truth. By relative truth Gandhi meant the actual knowledge of truth available

to man. He said that "Nobody in this world possesses absolute truth. This is God's attribute alone. Relative truth is all that we know. Therefore, we can only follow the truth as we see it. Such pursuit of truth cannot lead any one astray".²⁶

However, the obtaining of relative truth in more and more degrees is always possible. In other words, one should continuously strive to attain more and more knowledge of truth. This continuous search or seeking of truth gives man a dynamic character and meaningful life. Gandhi has outlined certain steps as necessary for seeking truth. The steps are primarily intended to clear the heart and attempt to self-discipline. It is only through these steps that one makes himself capable of obtaining relative knowledge of truth which is already present inside the heart. One may find the use of phrase like inside the heart slightly mystical in nature. In fact, Gandhi by using such phrase was trying to introduce the notion of conscience for his moral and political thinking. Such a notion i.e., the notion of conscience is something new to the contemporary moral and political thought. However, traditional philosophical thinking of both east and west did use this concept. It is through conscience that one comes to know relative truth. He used the words like 'Voice of God', 'of conscience',

'of truth' or 'the inner voice' or 'the still small voice' to mean the same thing. He says:

For the voice of God, of conscience, of Truth or the inner voice or the 'still small voice' mean one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast were fixed. Joy came over me. This was between 11 and 12 midnight. I felt refreshed and began to write the note about it which the reader must have seen.²⁷

However, one might not be convinced about the truth of what has been asserted in the above para. Could there be an epistemological method to accept the truth of what Gandhi says? One might wonder whether Gandhi is interested in convincing others at all. Gandhian answer is of course very simple. ✓ The truth is something which cannot be obtained by mutual convincing. It is something which each person has to acquire for himself.

He says:

Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice that I heard and that it was not an echo of my own heated imagination? I have no further evidence to convince

the sceptic. He is free to say that it was all self delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this- that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God.²⁸

In conclusion, one could say that Gandhi by making Truth as sovereign and by declaring Truth as God laid down a sound theoretical basis of his thought. By further making a distinction between absolute and relative truth he paved the way for tackling all actual moral and political problems without involving any logical inconsistency. By making absolute truth something unobtainable in its completeness Gandhi could evolve a basic principle of integrating all conflicting ideas. The truth being one and infinite, opens the possibility of infinite knowledge. Each person thus having a relative knowledge of truth has ultimately true knowledge of some dimension of absolute truth.) Thus apparently conflicting knowledge is actually a complementary knowledge. In this way Gandhi evolved a ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xx xxxxxx~~ unifying ground to remove all conflicts based on religion, race, caste, colour and sex. It would result into converting the whole mankind into an organic whole. However, truth merely make a theoretical opening. For practicing his ideal of truth one also needs a method to be adopted. The pursuit of adequate methods led Gandhi to understand and explain the notion of non-violence.

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THE CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhi is more known for his practices of non-violence than for his concept of truth. Truly speaking it was both truth and non-violence which are the hard core of his philosophical thinking. These are not two separate ideas though they appear to be so. These are integrally related with each other, i.e., one necessarily leads to the other. Gandhi himself has said that "without ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find truth. Ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin...Who can say which is the obverse and which is the reverse?"¹ Thus it is both ahimsa and truth which have equal importance for Gandhian thought and practice. However, Gandhi also considered non-violence as a means to achieve his moral and political goals. Non-violence in general means non-injury. In its narrower sense it means non-killing and in the widest sense it means harmlessness.

✓ Non-violence is generally understood as a negative concept i.e., the absence of violence is thought as a state of non-violence. Gandhi,

however, did not accept this. In his opinion, non-violence is not merely a negative concept. It is a positive concept. It does not just signify the absence of violence but asserts some positive state of affairs. In its positive content Gandhi generally equated it with Love. "In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the regulative charity".²

There have been some controversy regarding Gandhi's source of non-violence. As non-violence is generally accepted as a cardinal virtue in the domain of religion, many thinkers believed that it has religious origin in Gandhi's philosophy. Some held the view that Gandhi derived it from Christianity whereas, in the opinion of some others it was derived from Jainism or Hinduism. But in the face of Gandhi's own statements these do not seem to be based on sound foundation. Because Gandhi's knowledge of non-violence was independent of any religious scriptures. In other words he knew the doctrine or at least he was familiar with the notion of non-violence from his childhood before he read any religious scriptures. Gandhi in the issue of Young India published in 1925 clearly stated that when he first read Gita in 1889 he was familiar with the notion of non-

violence but had not thought seriously about it. As far as his religious faith is concerned he unequivocally maintained that he was a sanatani Hindu. Thus there is no truth in saying that he learnt the doctrine of non-violence either from Jainism or from Christianity. His familiarity with the notion of non-violence was actually through the writings of a Gujrati Poet Shamall Bhatt. Of course later on he always depended on Gita for the support and justification of non-violence.

Gandhi was never happy with the understanding of non-violence as non-killing. The religious doctrines have generally conveyed the impression as if non-violence means non-killing. Gandhi deviated from such understanding and offered his own interpretation to this in terms of love and charity. Killing is not necessarily a central part of violence. Likewise non-killing is also not a central part of non-violence. Expressing his unhappiness on the over-emphasis of non-killing in the interpretation of non-violence he once said that sometimes killing is the clearest proof of non-violence. Some kind of harassment could be worse than killing outrightly a mischief maker.

Since Gandhi had accepted an intimate connection between truth

and non-violence his main concern was to give moral colour to the concept of non-violence. Hence he equated the concept of non-violence with a wide variety of moral values such as humility, forgiveness, love, charity, selflessness, strength, non-attachment and innocence. Violence by the same standard was equated with trickery, intrigue, deceitfulness etc. In view of this moral interpretation Gandhi came closer to the Jaina and Buddhist view of non-violence. In Jaina and Buddhist system all sins are supposed to be originating in or are modifications of violence. The basic or the most primary sin in the ultimate analysis is the separateness of the soul from God. In other words, Gandhi viewed the relationship between man and God as organic one. Violence occurs only when the individual puts himself out of the organic whole i.e., when the distance between man and God is on the increase. This results necessarily into moral evils like selfishness, attempts to get personal benefit at the cost of others, etc. The nature of relationship between man and God is a subject of religion. In Gandhi's view the essence of religion is morality. In other words, the relationship between man and God has to be necessarily moral in character. More and more the man is closer to God, proportionately he has to be more and more moral.

Man's falling away from God, would render him proportionately immoral.

In Gandhi's scheme to the extent man is away from God he is violent and nearness to God is described as being non-violent. Thus, through the practice of non-violence it is hoped that one tries to bring himself closer as much as possible with God or Truth. In other words, the individual is attempting to put himself back in the organic structure. The implication of such an attempt would be the gradual reduction in one's selfishness, temptation for personal benefit and greed. Such an understanding of the doctrine surely does not give any overemphasis on the non-killing as the essence of non-violence. It rather works out the scheme of the transformation of life. Transformation once achieved to whatever extent will find expression in various dimensions of human life. One would, therefore, say that the moral interpretation of non-violence would render both morality and non-violence a source of all human activities. Consequently, Gandhi refused to accept different standards of living in different situations. He also could not accept any distinction between the pursuits of this world and other world. For him, politics was as valuable as religion was. All that is needed is that in our thinking and laying down strategies for meeting

various challenges one is not free to dismiss his basic commitment to morality or non-violence. B.G.Tilak once wrote to Gandhi:

Politics is a game of worldly people, and not of sadhus, and instead of the maxim "akkhodhenajine kkhodham"/conquer anger by non-anger/ as preached by Buddha, I prefer to rely on the maxim of Shri Krishna, "Ye gatthas mam parapadyante thaams/ thatthaiva bhajaamyaham"/in whatever way men resort to me, even so do I render to them/.... Both methods are equally honest and righteous but the one is more suited to this world than the other.³

Gandhi replied:

For me there is no conflict between the two texts...The Buddhist text lays down an eternal principle. The text from the Bhagavad Gita shows to me how the principle of conquering hate by love, untruth by truth, can and must be applied. If it be true that God metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to others, it follows that, if we would escape condign punishment, we may not return anger for anger but gentleness even against anger. And this is the law not for unworldly but essentially for the worldly. With deference to the Lokamanya, I venture to say that it betrays mental laziness to think that the world is not for Sadhus. The epitome of religions is to promote Purushartha, and purushartha is nothing but a desperate attempt to become Sadhu, i.e., to become a gentleman in every sense of the term.⁴

Although according to Gandhi man has evolved from the animal world yet, it is different from the animal world mainly because of its being capable of discarding animal tendencies and developing moral tendencies in him. Thus to be a man is actually a continuous effort to de-link oneself with the animal past and look forward to become more and more moral. For

Gandhi, this entire process of becoming a man is essentially a practice of non-violence. This position of Gandhi differentiates him from a great many philosophers. In the opinions of Hobbes and Locke man is basically selfish which in Gandhi's opinion is an animal tendency. Hobbes and Locke suggested that this animal tendency has to be curbed or put under control by adequate external force. Gandhi on the contrary, conceives the possibility of man himself voluntarily giving up this baser instincts, through self control. Gandhi also could not accept the Aristotelian definition of man as a rational being. For him, the essential feature of man is his capability to become moral. Professor M. Hiriyanna comes very close to Gandhi when he says that knowingly pursuing of purushārthas is the distinctive mark differentiating human beings from other sentient creatures. Thus it is the effort of pursuing a moral scheme of purushārtha which makes man moral or rather makes a man. It is just not enough to grant rationality to man as Aristotle did. For Gandhi and Hiriyanna man is a value concept. Morality is an essential ingredient of man. Without it the so called man will be more on the side of animals. Thus by interpreting the notion of non-violence fundamentally as moral notion and also making morality a distinctive feature

of man Gandhi succeeded in giving highest place to non-violence in his thoughts about man and society. The only way open to man to become moral is through the practice of non-violence. The attempts to become man in Gandhian sense requires a deliberate self-suffering. In other words, a continuous upward growth in becoming non-violence. Such a non-violent person will not intend to harm or injure anyone even to a wrong doer. The practice of non-violence would gradually annihilate one's ego, and thus make a man gradually less and less individualistic. In its positive aspect it would make the man feel more and more close to other members of his species. The feeling of being separated from others makes it possible to have conflicts and hatred for them. The gradual reduction of separateness from fellow beings will, therefore, minimise the chances of conflict and hatred. This will bring man to realise his place in society and nature as someone integrally related to everything else. This feeling makes him also accountable for the misdeeds of others. In such an eventuality he is rather compelled by his conscience to accept self-suffering for the sins of others. Gandhi hopes that this sort of self-suffering will work as a double-edged sword i.e., on the one hand, it would further lead to the growth of the sufferer

and on the other it would bring a desirable change in the heart of the wrong doer. Since the mankind is organically related the good deeds of anyone will have the same all pervading impact as much as the bad deeds will have. Even one person's attempt to improve morally by the practice of non-violence will eventually improve the balance of moral behaviour in the society. Gandhi is very well aware that such a transformation is not possible in the masses at the very beginning. However, a few sincerely dedicated votaries of truth and non-violence can in due course of time generate an ethos of morality in the society which would go a long way in gradual removal of the necessity of using violence. It would in this manner in the long run, many be slowly but surely bring about a transformation in human society.

Whereas, non-violence was understood as a moral force, violence was understood as external force by Gandhi. Violence as an external force is intended to suppress or compell a person or a group of person to do or not to do certain things. But non-violence as a moral force is not intended to compell or suppress but actually it is to awaken the presence of truth in the heart of the person. Hence, though violence and non-violence appear to be some kind of force, yet they are in clear opposition to each other.

Most of the thinkers considered non-violence as a cardinal virtue in the domain of religion and has no role in other dimensions of our living. Specially in the field of politics, it is accepted by a large group of thinkers that it is the violence which works and not the non-violence. Not only this, they even defend the desirability and justifiability of the use of violence in managing the affairs of a state. Most of the arguments are based on the idea of maintaining stability, peace and cohesion through use of violence. In absence of these it is likely that society might collapse.

Neither Indian nor Western tradition is an exception to this. In the Indian tradition whereas we find Manu and Bhisma ~~boldly~~ arguing for the use of violence, it is Kautilya, who worked out a very forceful plea in support of violence. In the western tradition thinkers like Hobbes, Machiavelli, Rousseau and Locke did not hesitate in recommending varying degrees of violence. They were all uniformly of the opinion that violence is a necessary requirement in the arena of a society and politics.

In the context of such theories when Gandhi's thinking is examined, one registers a sharp contrast as he was pleading for non-violence at all levels.

Politics is generally understood as a "struggle for power".⁵ The notion of power is closely linked with the concept of politics. That is the reason for most of the political theorists justify the use of power. Power in this context means coercive power i.e., Government's capacity to compell people or the capacity to cause some fear to the people to do or not to do certain things in the society. Different thinkers identified different ways of pursuing and acquiring power. Gandhi was well aware of this situation and also recognised that it is something given to human beings to seek power. "Man has always desired power. Ownership of property gives that power. Man also hankers after posthumous fame based on power".⁶ Although Gandhi recognized seeking of power as a basic characteristic of human nature, yet he did not consider this as something which can never be altered. His concept of man was such that man could always move upward by giving up the animal tendencies inherited from animal world. Thus the seeking of power to Gandhi was a bestial tendency. Consequently, he maintained that "Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute".⁷

It is well known that those thinkers who considered power as basic to human affairs evolved a moral and ethical system keeping concept

of power at the centre. In other words, the concept of power can generate certain normative principles for human beings. Gandhi being an upholder of the principle of non-violence held a radically opposite view. He considered morality or moral values to be fundamental. Truth which is a repository of all moral values is already given to us. Thus the concept of power in Gandhian scheme can never enjoy a primary place over moral values. It is the moral values that must generate the concept of power. So it is not the power which should produce normative principles rather it is the normative principles which should produce power. Such power should be actually derived from non-violence as non-violence is the substance of morality. Gandhi, given his views of truth and non-violence, could not accept any justification whatsoever for stability and cohesion of society in terms of use of power or coercive power.

Gandhi in his social philosophy was completely opposite to those who believed that weapons should be used against our irreconciling enemy. Specially as logic of the society is understood by Marxists, there is no escape from the use of violence. The proletariates have to be violent and deceitful in broad day light. It has to be rather their known action plan

against the capitalists. Gandhi could not accept this as he ruled out the possibility of there being an irreconciling enemy. The failure to bring enemy to the right thinking or just point is actually our weakness. Surely, one would consider it wrong to punish or be violent to somebody even if he is not at fault. Not only this Gandhi went to the extent of maintaining that if non-violence is adequately practiced with sincerity, it is always bound to succeed. That there is no defeat for a votary of non-violence. Gandhi had absolute faith in non-violence. He was neither a relativist nor a utilitarian in his thinking. The utilitarians tend to justify whether violent or non-violent actions only in terms of utility. Gandhi while rejecting this said:

a votary of ahimsa cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula. He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. He will therefore be willing to die so that others may live..... The absolutists sphere of destruction will always be the narrowest possible. The utilitarian's has no limit. Judged by the standard of non-violence the late war was wholly wrong. Judged by the utilitarian standard, each party has justified it according to its idea of utility....Precisely on the same around the anarchist justifies his assassinations. But none of these acts can possibly be justified on the greatest-good - of - all principle.⁸

Thus understood, non-violence does not become an instrument in the hands of weak to develop an escapist attitude. It rather becomes a

symbol of mental and moral strength. It is also not a policy of expediency rather it is a principle of life. Hence non-violence is actually a creed for Gandhi. In 1935, he argued that a creed has to be all pervasive and cannot remain confined to certain activities and ignore others. A policy cannot have the strength of "life force".⁹

He further laid down the basic principles of practicing the creed of non-violence.

(1) Non-violence implies as complete self purification as is humanly possible. Self purification is to be attained by practicing a vigorous ethical discipline and the taking of vows.

(2) Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

(3) Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e. the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

(4) There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat. By this, Gandhi implies that non-violence by definition can never fail. The apparent failure can be explained in terms

of moral inadequacy of the user. Similarly, the success at violence can also be understood in terms of a narrow or shortsighted view of success.

(5) The ultimate end of non-violence is a sure victory if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality, where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory. This means that a votary of non-violence does not aim to defeat anyone but merely intends to achieve desirable results.

Gandhi by enunciating the above given five principles of non-violence made the creed of non-violence applicable to all circumstances ruling out the possibility of any exception. "Laws to be laws admit of no exceptions" and Ahimsa is the "law of our being".

Gandhi tried his best to argue on logical grounds about the futility of using violence. The use of force is a symptom of weakness. It is generally used when men are overwhelmed with fear and what is achieved through fear or external coercion is retained as long as fear is present.

Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand and Stalin on the other are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it may be as transitory as that of Jenghis's slaughter. But the effects of Buddha's non-violence persist and are likely to grow with age. And the more it is practiced, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims "a miracle has happened".¹⁰

Although Gandhi pleaded for non-violence to be an absolute principle yet he considered that Himsa under certain circumstances is unavoidable. Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically. It is only a theoretical construct. There is nothing like unalloyed non-violence. "We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of Himsa. Man cannot live for a moment without causing or unconsciously committing outward himsa". Undoubtedly the practitioner of non-violence is supposed to constantly grow in self restraint and compassion. But it is not possible for him to be entirely free from outward violence. Although Gandhi believed in somekind of unavoidable violence, yet, in his opinion a votary of ahimsa can honestly and unceasingly make attempts to live in accordance with the absolute principle of non-violence. This might appear to be a contradiction in Gandhi's basic position. He was indeed severely criticised for his approval of extermination pestes of the killing of rabid dog and specially for ordering for killing of an ailing calf. However, as I understand there is no contradiction involved here. As explained earlier in the chapter that in understanding the notion of violence and non-violence it is the human tendency or intention that has a central place. Actions can be called as

violent action only if it is done with the intention of harming, causing any damage or with any ill will against the person. Gandhi's recognition of unavoidable himsa is not really rooted in any such intentions or motives it is rather seen as something inevitable for the existence of man in society. Hence, properly speaking the so called unavoidable himsa is apparently himsa. If rigidly Gandhian scheme is followed it ought not to be called himsa.

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CHAPTER IV

SATYAGRAHA, PASSIVE-RESISTANCE, CIVIL-
DISOBEDIENCE AND NON - CO - OPERATION

On the conceptual pillars of truth and non-violence Gandhi set out to evolve a scheme of social action and social re-construction. The very necessity to work out such a scheme explaining his dissatisfaction with the then prevailing socio-political condition in particular and system of ordering society in general. He was never agreeable to grant any legitimacy to any kind of external coercion. He designed a scheme or technique to fight any kind of injustice, tyranny, oppression and exploitations in a given society. A social order which is essentially based on human relationship should be completely free from these evils. Thus he had a twofold objectives before him.

(a) To evolve a scheme for fighting immediate practices of injustice, tyranny, coercion etc.

(b) To offer an alternative social order. The alternative social order as dreamt by Gandhi has come to be known as Sarvodaya i.e. non-violent socialism.

The achievement of Sarvodaya or non-violent socialism requires a process of social change to begin. It was precisely at this juncture that Gandhi evolved a revolutionary approach^{of} social change and social action called as Satyagraha.

The smallest manifestation of exploitation in a society could be possible at the level of family. And the largest manifestation one could be conceived as the state oppression. Gandhi designed his doctrine of satyagraha in such a manner that it could fight injustice from the smallest scale to the largest scale.

As I have already discussed in Chapter II and III that Gandhi was always firm in his conviction about the supremacy of moral sanctions which are ultimately derived from the Moral law called Dharma. Truth and non-violence are two ingredients of this. In the face of such conviction it would have been logically inconsistent for Gandhi to accept any other kind of sanction which draws its authority from external agencies. Hence Gandhi could not have accepted a Hobbesian scheme, a Lockean or even a utilitarian or a democratic scheme of justifying the use of force. As morality manifests itself through human conscience, he recognised it as a primary duty for every individual to make himself capable of hearing what he called "inner voice", "still small voice within" God's voice" etc. Even prior to Gandhi there have been attempts to give supremacy to moral sanction in the affairs of society and politics. The famous philosopher Proudhon made a similar point but what he neglected was taken up by Gandhi. The main problem in this connection was how to concretise the principles of truth

and non-violence in actual situations. What are its pre-requisites ?

Specially at the level of mass participation how to live the principles of truth and non-violence. The doctrine of Satyagraha was intended to tackle and adequately answer all such problems. The fact that Gandhi could use Satyagraha for settling down domestic affairs, provincial issues and even to overthrow the powerful British regime speaks for the efficacy of Satyagraha. The general impression carried by masses that satyagraha was a method of merely overthrowing a foreign rule is completely unfounded. In the scheme of Gandhi satyagraha was intended to fight any kind of rule from outside as basically violent. He opposed any kind of rule from outside. He stood for self-rule.

He traced the evil of legalising coercion in the form of state organisation, to the modern Western civilization. "This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. According to the teaching of Mohammed this would be considered a Satanic Civilization. Hinduism calls it the Black Age.... It is eating into the vitals of the English nation. It must be shunned."

In his opinion the modern western civilization is based on untruth and violence. India by accepting this civilization would be giving up its superior civilization. Satyagraha for him even was a way to restore Indianess to Indians and establish the superiority of Indian civilization over others.

The institution of state/government created by Western Civilization and justified in various ways was essentially seen by Gandhi as a "Soulless Machine". Although individuals are considered to have soul yet state and government run by individual was declared as soulless by Gandhi. Reason being that those who are actually responsible for running the state take legalized coercion as granted. They remain convinced about the justifiability of coercion and hence it is much more difficult to improve them. Moreover, the state represents an organised form of coercion. Hence, possesses a great threat to human dignity and respect. Given such a perception of state/government Gandhi was clear in his mind that ideally state must be completely removed, If this ideal cannot be achieved the minimum possible power should be vested in the state.

Satyagraha was a technique and a strategy evolved to decentralize the state power. Gandhi during his stay in South Africa, of course, had the whole idea of Satyagraha quite clear in his mind. But he was in his search for appropriate term for his doctrine. He did not want that his doctrines should be confused with the then present doctrines under the name of Passive Resistance, Civil Disobedience, Non-co^operation etc. etc. A suggestion from his close associate Mr. Monglal Gandhi came in 1906 that the doctrine should be named as Sadagraha. However, Gandhi improved upon this and finally gave the name Satyagraha. In the term Satyagraha he could see not only the description of his doctrine fitted very well but even the inspiring episodes in this direction were also covered. Needless to say that in his childhood he was deeply impressed by the character of Harischandra who lived completely by truthfulness and acquired the little of being a Satyavadi. The story of Prahlad clinging to truth against all kinds of ty^oranny and coercion left a deep impression. The term Satyagraha thus conveyed the meaning that one should firmly hold on or remain rooted in truth under all conditions.

.... I therefore corrected it to "Satyagraha". Truth (satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore

serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement "Satyagraha" that is to say, the force which is born to Truth and Love or non-violence, and gave up the use of the phrase "passive resistance".²

He was at pains to clearly distinguish his doctrine of satyagraha from what is generally known as passive resistance. He pointed out in 1908 that the idea of Passive Resistance was as old as the human race. It was understood and widely practiced in India much before it was adopted in Europe. One can trace the origin of the passive resistance in Indian tradition specially in the writings of Bishma and Bamadeva. In modern India the great exponent of Passive resistance was Aurobindo Ghose. For him it was a kind of political tactics, whereas for Gandhi Satyagraha was a spiritual therapy for human society. Aurobindo Ghose was not opposed to any sort of aggressive, armed and violent resistance. Aurobindo's doctrine of passive resistance declares "we recognise...no method of action as politically good or evil except as it truly helps or hinders our progress for its national emancipation".³ But he thought that for Indian conditions it was only passive resistance that was suitable. The method of aggressive resistance is intended to cause positive harm to the government, whereas, passive resistance is the method of abstaining from doing something which is going to help the government. In other words

it wants to adopt a general policy of boycott. The boycott of courts of law, foreign schools, government jobs, paying rent and taxes etc. should all be practised under the doctrine of passive resistance. In the ~~precedent~~ ~~opinion~~ of Aurobindo Ghose this will bring down the unlawful and unjust government. Gandhi in order to distinguish his doctrine from passive resistance worked out five major differences between Satyagraha and passive resistance.

First, the passive resistance does not make us strong and, therefore, it will be given up on the earliest opportunity. In satyagraha we are strong and grow stronger every day. With the increasing strength we become more effective, and, therefore, leaves lesser and lesser scope of its being given up.

Secondly, there is no scope for love in passive resistance, Satyagraha on the contrary is not only devoided of hatred but also considers it as breach of the principle of Satyagraha.

Thirdly, in passive resistance there is no scope of use of arms but it can be treated as preparatory stage to use arms. In Satyagraha the

use of arms is completely ruled out even in the most favourable circumstances.

Fourthly, Satyagraha can be offered to even most dearests but passive resistance cannot be practiced unless the opponent ceases to be dear to us.

Fifthly, whereas in passive resistance there is always an intention of harassing the opponent, in satyagraha injuring in any way to opponents is not even a remotest idea.⁴

Prior to Gandhi's doctrine of Satyagraha, Henry David Thoreau had also formulated doctrine of his Civil Disobedience. Some authors have gone to the extent of saying that the origin* of the doctrine satyagraha lies in Thoreau's theory of Civil Disobedience. Neither Gandhi accepted this nor a historical study of Gandhian thought would support this view.

* The influence of Henry Thoreau upon Mahatma Gandhi, now universally recognized, is generally treated perfunctorily; almost all popular articles on Thoreau usually devote at least one sentence to Gandhi's indebtedness to "Civil Disobedience". Since Indian opinion, the South African news paper published by Gandhi from 1903 to 1914, is now available for study, much new material on Gandhi's knowledge of Thoreau has come to light. Before Indian opinion could be studied, information about Gandhi's indebtedness to Thoreau was scattered and fragmentary. For example, Gandhi, in his 1942 appeal "To American friends", wrote, "You have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay

Gandhi held the view that satyagraha is a much broader concept than Civil Disobedience and he conceived the doctrine of satyagraha prior to his knowledge of Thoreau's doctrine of ~~satyagraha~~ ^{civil disobedience}. It is evident from the last sentence of the passage quoted below wherein he says that "you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, ~~who~~ furnished a scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South-Africa". Civil disobedience he said is "Civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments"⁵

The expression was, so far as I am aware, coined by Thoreau to signify his own resistance to the laws of a slave State. He has left masterly treatise on the duty of Civil Disobedience. But Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of non-violence.

Probably, also, Thoreau limited his breach of statutory laws to the revenue law, i.e. payment of taxes. Whereas the term Civil Disobedience as practised in 1919 covered a breach of any statutory and unmoral law. It signified the resister's outlawry in a civil, i.e., non-violent manner. He invoked the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffered imprisonment. It is a branch of Satyagraha.⁶

Thoreau in his essay on Civil Disobedience propounded the view that government is not a necessity as a matter of principle. It is at best an expedient one. He even went further to say that most governments

on the 'Duty of Civil Disobedience' scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa".

George, Hendrick, The Influence of Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience on Gandhi's Satyagraha", in Walden and Civil Disobedience, (ed.) by Thomas Owen, 1966, p.364.

are generally, ~~an~~expedient. Whatever may be the nature of government, it cannot conform to justice.

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? I think that we should be man first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume, is to do at any time what I think right...Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. ...The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies....All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable.⁷

Gandhi's Satyagraha appears to be closely resembling with Thoreau's doctrine of Civil disobedience. Thoreau based his doctrine on the presupposition that individual's status as a human being is both logically and morally prior to his being a member of society or the subject of a state. But as stated earlier Gandhi claimed that his satyagraha is not in opposition to Thoreau's Civil disobedience rather civil disobedience is a branch of satyagraha.

Civil disobedience presupposes a willing obedience to any law

which does not hurt the individual conscience or moral sense of a person. However, Gandhi was also equally emphatic about the moral sense of the people. But he was more emphatic on the 'civil' part of Civil disobedience that is non-violent way of disobedience resulting into self-suffering. However, Gandhi stood for a total removal of any kind of external laws. To him any external legislation is violence. He pleaded, therefore, that men should learn to behave from their inner moral sense and thereby render all laws ineffective. Civil disobedience can be occasionally practiced by individuals but a process of social change rather a process of reconstruction cannot be taken up by the method of Civil disobedience. Given Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience, it seems that it can hardly be a point of practice of masses. In case a group unit^e and takes recourse to civil disobedience, in all likelihood, it would be for selfish reasons. For instance in South Africa under the leadership of Kallenbach and Polak thousands of labourers offered Civil Disobedience with the motive that the removal of annual poll tax levied upon them, would bring some economic gain. Satyagraha, on the contrary has to be completely free from any motive of personal gain whether practiced by masses or by an individual.

Finally in this connection one can say that civil disobedience is limited to the breach of civil laws whereas satyagraha in its scope covers the whole gamut of human activities.

Another concept among the cluster of concepts surrounding the concept of satyagraha is Non-co-operation. I wish to have a brief discussion of it now. In the year 1921 Gandhi made a clear distinction between civil disobedience and non-co-operation. The distinction was made mainly on the grounds that he intended to make a difference between individuals right to resist unjust laws and duty of an entire group to withdraw co-operation of state or social institution which maintains an unjust and unmoral system. Viewed from this point civil disobedience turns out to be a narrower concept with significant political implications but non-co-operation turns out to be a philosophy of social action. To use Gandhi's terminology civil disobedience makes far more spiritual demands from individual i.e. tapasya in comparison to non-co-operation. Thus non-co-operation is a quickly universalizable method of social change. He defined non-co-operation as "a protest against an unwilling and unwilling participation in evil".⁸ To make it further strong he adds that it is a duty of every one to non-

co-operate with an unjust Government.

It is a means to an end, the end being to make the present Government just, whereas it has become mostly unjust. Co-operation with a just a government is a duty; non-co-operation with an unjust government is equally a duty. 9

As a consequence of performing such a duty that is of non-co^operation with authorities will automatically bring an end to evil. Hence as a means to achieve social dignity and justice Gandhi emphatically asserted the necessity of non-co-operation.

This deliberate refusal to co-operate is like the necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows. Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing. Indeed, even whilst the crops are growing, the weeding fork, as every husbandman knows, is an instrument almost of daily use. The nation's non-co-operation is an invitation to the government to co-operate with it on its own terms as is every nation's right and every good government's duty! 10

The practice of non-co-operation not only works for the removal of the unjust government but also brings special advantages to its practitioners. Such as that their weaknesses will come to surface and realising them would lead to the necessity of purification. It will also enable us to understand moral development and political maturity of people. The significance of non-co-operation is dependent on the fact that it is

a programme of **propaganda** by reducing **profession** to practice, not one of compelling others to yield obedience by violence, direct or indirect. We must try patiently to convert our opponents. If we wish to evolve the spirit of democracy out of slavery, we must be scrupulously exact in our dealings, with opponents...¹

In conclusion I wish to say that Gandhi considered both civil disobedience and non-co-operation purely non-violent methods of resolving all conflicts. He viewed them as the most powerful weapons of bringing a change in the social and political life of a community. However the objective of bringing a change has to be achieved by effecting a change in the value structure of the society which will eventually result into the change in attitudes. He conceptually ruled out the possibility of adopting of policies with the intention to harass or torture the opponent. This is the core of satyagraha. Failure to understand this point has led some marxist thinkers to say that Gandhian method was just an extravagant nationalization of a politically expedient method.

Gandhi's doctrine was firmly rooted in the twin values of truth and non-violence. His basic aim through the practice of satyagraha was not only to change the value structure of the rulers but also to evolve greater

dedication and sincerity towards these values in masses. The practice of these values is not limited to one or two dimensions of life. He maintained that a man's life is an "indivisible whole"¹². Thus one has to cling to these values in every walk of life and at all times. Thus satyagraha in his scheme became a much wider concept incorporating many other items as its branches.

Satyagraha is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil disobedience is one such branch. Satya (Truth) and ahimsa (non-violence) together makes the parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out.¹³

Indeed, it is difficult to know what is truth ? But then a satyagrahi has to begin as a searcher after truth. He has to accept the truth as the ultimate court for him. A satyagrahi has a duty not only to awaken his conscience but also work for awakening of slumbering conscience of public. It is only then, he would be able to achieve the desired goals. Thus one can clearly see that Gandhi through his doctrine of satyagraha on the one hand fought for removal of political injustice and on the other aroused the moral sense of the public i.e. simultaneously began a process of social reconstruction.

One might question the necessity and justifiability of over emphasising self-suffering as a means to convert the opponent. It is rather well argued belief that we must have faith in human reason. It is through rational persuasion that we should try to change or convert the opinions of others. Such an argument I believe would not be acceptable by Gandhi. It has been generally seen that with the people having selected convictions and therefore a closed mind, reason can hardly do anything. "The eyes of their understanding are opened not by argument but by the suffering of the satyagrahi. The satyagrahi's strive to reach the reason through the heart".¹⁴

The foregoing discussion brings out that Gandhi's concept of satyagraha is based on some kind of religious and metaphysical beliefs. The belief that there is soul which is paramount and superior to body has to be accepted as a necessary condition of satyagraha. It is not merely a logical condition but has to be a living faith with the practitioners of satyagraha. In 1931 he said:

It is a fundamental principle of satyagraha that the tyrant, whom the satyagrahi seeks to resist, has power over his body and material possessions, but he can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even

when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of satyagraha was born from a knowledge of this fundamental truth.¹⁸

Thus he based satyagraha on the idea of soul and consequently satyagraha came to be known as soul force. The soul of the man represents the eternal truth and therefore satyagraha was also named as Truth-force.

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CHAPTER V

SATYAGRAHA - Its Significance and Scope

The most important questions raised in connection with Satyagraha are regarding the scope, significance and application of satyagraha. To some it is impossible to practice satyagraha because of its utopian character. For others it was perhaps adequate under the British imperialistic system and hence it has outlived its utility in modern India. A depth study of satyagraha would not justify any of these positions. As early as 1919 Gandhi considered "the law of satyagraha"- the law of love- as an eternal principle. Hence it should be eternally practicable in Gandhian framework. However, the prerequisite for its practice is adherence to truth and willingness to suffer as a mark of love for others. "It is as difficult or as easy to practice as any other virtue"¹ Its area of applicability is not confined merely to the field of politics. It was rather conceived as an extension of the rule of domestic life into the political. As family disputes are settled with reference to the principle of love, so should be the case with political matters. Underlying this was the Indian idea of अमुक्षैकं सुखं कर्म. The fact that Gandhi found it equally useful in both domestic and political affairs points towards its universal applicability and "its universal applicability is a demonstration

of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children".² As he was firmly committed to the metaphysical cum religious belief about the presence of divinity in man and nature, he had to accept that the love force or soul force is present in every human being. Thus all human beings are capable of becoming satyagrahis. Gandhi might appear here to be closely on the side of Natural Law thinkers of western tradition. In fact it is not the case. By accepting its presence in all human beings Gandhi ruled out the possibility of making any distinction between kinsman and strangers, young and old, man and woman friend and foe.³ It further leads to the removal of all distinctions based on ~~caste~~, creed, nation, race etc. In this sense he was working out a doctrine for mankind. The doctrine which could be practiced by all men at all times. "It is a universal principle of universal application".⁴ A satyagrahi by his adherence to truth and self-suffering not only fights against injustice and coercion but simultaneously also performs an educative role. By way of his own suffering he invites the attention of public opinion towards his settled convictions and convinces them of his sincerity for the purpose. Public opinion grown in this manner will become irresistible.

Gandhi undoubtedly believed in the universal scope of the application of satyagraha but he also laid stringent conditions as prerequisites for the practice of satyagraha. Broadly speaking he laid down about seven conditions.

First of all, it is conceptually ruled out that satyagraha can be launched for an unjust cause. By very definition, it means holding on to truth and hence it cannot be logically used to fight for unjust or untruthful cause.

Secondly, it by definition rules out the possibility of any kind of violence even in thought, speech and deed.⁵ Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence.⁶ Gandhi said that experience had taught him that civility is the most difficult part of satyagraha.⁷ Civility is not merely outward gentleness but it is actually not harbouring any kind of ill will against one's opponent. In satyagraha we fight evil deed and unjust rules and not the persons. All persons have divinity in them therefore they should be as dear to a satyagrahi as he himself is to himself.

Thirdly, satyagraha requires a willingness and capacity to suffer.

The one who has no ability to go through "Fiery ordeal" i.e. to sacrifice everything one has, he is unfit to be a satyagrahi.

Fourthly, satyagraha presupposes a reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of state i.e. without any fear of punishment. A satyagrahi should develop the virtue of tolerance. It is only through the tolerance of even some inconvenient laws that he would earn a right to offer satyagraha against intolerable, immoral laws.⁸

Fifthly, discipline is obligatory. Satyagrahis must engage themselves in constructive social work to develop required qualities. No mass satyagraha is possible unless and until masses are converted into disciplined soldiers. Satyagraha requires calmness and courage that come from discipline and training in voluntary obedience.

Sixthly, satyagraha requires unparalleled humility. It is only the actions of the satyagrahi that must speak for his strength and correctness of the position.⁹

Seventhly, Satyagraha can never be offered for personal gain. It has to be always for a selfless motive. Man achieves this trait by

a prolonged t̄apas.

In brief one can say that "satyagraha struggle is impossible without capital in the shape of character"¹⁰. It is not a movement of brag, bluster or bluff.

Gandhi not only worked out the preconditions of satyagraha but also set out some rules of behaviour for a satyagrahi. The rules were largely derived from the preconditions. In order to maintain civility i.e. non-violent character, discipline is the most important factor. Specially in case of mass satyagraha it is considered to be an utmost necessity. The inculcation ^{of} discipline is possible by participating in social work.

"Maximum of work and minimum of ~~participating in social work~~ ^{speech must be your motto...}"¹¹ Following rules were however recommended by Gandhi to be followed by a satyagrahi.

- (1) He must have a living faith in God, for He is his only Rock.
- (2) He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.
- (3) He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up his life and his possessions.
- (4) He must be a habitual khadi-wearer and spinner. This is essential for India.
- (5) He must be a teetotaler and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant.

(6) He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.

(7) He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.¹²

The list however, is not exhaustive but only illustrative. More and more one is likely to know and formulate better and better rules as one comes to grasp the "science of satyagraha". He was well aware of the practical difficulties of launching mass satyagraha though in theory it was not an impossibility. Hence, he always had a preference for satyagraha by an individual or highly disciplined few.

From the foregoing discussion it appears that Gandhi undoubtedly considered doctrine of satyagraha universal in scope but added very stringent conditions for its applicability. It raises a doubt about the actual practicability of the doctrine. As a theoretician or a thinker he was interested in conceptual working out of a scheme which is ideal even if it is not practical in its fullest extent. It, however, laid communists, terrorists and constitutionalists to think that Gandhi was engaged in a self-deception. In other words, they felt that as envisaged by Gandhi, Satyagraha cannot be practiced. Perhaps the best possible defence that could be offered on behalf of Gandhi is that in the context of the

doctrine of satyagraha he employed a wide variety of methods. With a broad spectrum of devices it is easier to protect the purity of the doctrine. It would ensure a greater practical relevance. Thus the burden of choosing appropriate method lies on those who choose to launch satyagraha at a particular place, on a particular occasion and for a particular cause. From the writings of Gandhi one can identify four main methods of satyagraha: purificatory, penitential, non-co-operation, civil disobedience, the constructive social work. Of course, these are overlapping. The distinction is made mainly from the point of view of conceptual clarification.

Under purificatory and penitential methods falls the pledges, prayers and fasts. The pledge is a solemn public declaration of what a satyagraha would do and from what he would abstain. The notion of prayer is intended to remove the cover of ignorance shrouding the real divine nature of man. It is also supposed to help in self-surrendering to the eternal principles of truth and non-violence. Fasts are supposed to lead to an introspective meditation of specific issues. Fasts should be generally observed for a short duration. Occasionally it could be used for atonement of one's own sins or for sins of one's fellow beings. All

these separately or jointly may be used to attract the attention of people in power or are held guilty of unjust and unmoral practices.

In the category of non-co-operation falls hartal, boycott, strikes, fasting unto death etc. Most of these are again meant for a short duration and an advance notice should be given about the observance of these. Boycotting of public institutions is intended to paralyse the unjust political system. It would leave the wrong doers in complete isolation and force them to see the folly of their wrong doing.

Under civil disobedience comes picketing, marches, non-payment of taxes and voluntary defiance of specific laws. Gandhi had no doubts about the efficacy of these method but he also gave a word of caution that it ought not to be practiced by indisciplined persons. Without discipline it would "instead of leading to Swaraj lead to no-raj".¹³

Every time he discussed the theory and practice of satyagraha, he never forgot to make repeated assertions about the firm commitment to Satya and Ahimsa.

The realization of which required tapasya for an individual.

After stressing the different aspects of satyagraha in 1925 he recommended that satyagrahi should engage himself in constructive social works. Addressing some group of satyagrahis he said:

That is the mass constructive programme I want you to do, and that is the basis of the training for the non-violence of the brave. It is whole and indivisible, and those who do not believe in it whole-heartedly must leave me and work according to their own lights.¹⁴

The constructive social work is intended to develop corporate living without that a non-violent organization cannot be created. The constructive social work included the spread of literacy, restoring communal unity, removal of untouchability, peasant upliftment, creation of non-violence, labour unions, decentralization of economic production and growth of local skills etc.

In substance I would like to say that Gandhi elaborated and employed a wide range of methods under the doctrine of satyagraha. Some of these devices are limited and negative but there are the other ones that are positive and comprehensive. Gandhi considered the law of progression as a distinctive feature of the application of satyagraha.

My experience has...taught me that Law of Progression applies to every righteous struggle. But, in the case of Satyagraha the law amounts to an axiom. As the Ganga advances, other streams flow into it, and hence at the mouth of it grows so wide that neither bank is to be seen and a person sailing upon the river cannot make out where the river ends and the sea begins. So also as a Satyagraha struggle progresses onward, many other element helps to swell its current, and there is a constant growth in the results to which it leads. This is really inevitable, and is bound up with the first principles of Satyagraha. For, in satyagraha, the minimum is also the maximum, and as it is the irreducible minimum, there is no question of retreat, and the only movement possible is an advance. In other struggles, even when they are righteous, the demand is first pitched a little higher so as to admit of future reduction, and hence the Law of Progression does not apply to all of them without exception...The Ganga does not leave its course in search of tributaries. Even so does the Satyagrahi not leave his path which is sharp as the sword's edge. But as the tributaries spontaneously join the Ganga as it advances, so it is with the river that is Satyagraha.¹⁵

Needless to say that despite the universality of the scope of satyagraha, it is not a simple thing to practice. He was also quite aware of the limits and possible abuse of the doctrine of satyagraha. Rather given his tremendous experience of the working he could very clearly observe the limits and rule out the possible abuses of satyagraha. In 1928, in his book 'Satyagraha in South Africa', Gandhi clearly stated that:

...they must only not transgress the limits prescribed by wisdom and appreciation of their own capacity. Satyagraha offered on every occasion seasonable or otherwise would be corrupted into duragraha. And if any one takes to satyagraha without having measured his own strength and afterwards sustains a defeat, he not only disgraces himself but he also brings the matchless weapon of satyagraha into disrepute by his folly.¹⁶

R. Iyer in his book rightly raises a cluster of questions arising from this quote,

There are several difficulties in this passage. The word "seasonable" is imprecise and question-begging. How exactly does one measure one's strength before actually undertaking satyagraha? When can we be certain that defeat is not temporary but final, not seeming but real? If we can judge such matters only after the event, the notion of duragraha could become a merely pejorative term applied on the basis of a purely utilitarian criterion. Also, it might help to appraise but not to avoid the abuse of satyagraha.¹⁷

The difficulties may not be insurmountable in practice but they are very important and from the point of view of Gandhi's conceptual frame work.

The distinction between duragraha and satyagraha is a matter of moral and political judgement. A person in order to make a best possible judgement has to develop a high degree of honesty and self-awareness constantly through self-criticism and self-awareness. The attainment of these qualities, will be possible, thereby, in a dedicated search after truth. The actual judgement in a situation would surely vary according to the knowledge of truth one has obtained. Thus the notions of satyagraha and duragraha appears to be strongly subjective. Gandhi, in order to distinguish between a true or false satyagraha, preferred to take into account the motives of the performer and not the consequences. He was absolutely clear in his

mind that he is not advancing a utilitarian doctrine which takes into account the consequences.

What one regards as true Satyagraha may very likely be otherwise. Satyagraha, therefore, cannot be resorted to for personal gain, but only for the good of others. A Satyagrahi should always be ready to undergo suffering and pecuniary loss....The triumph of satyagraha consists in meeting death in the insistence on truth. A Satyagrahi is always unattached to the attainment of the object of satyagraha;... fasting for the sake of personal gain is nothing short of intimidation and the result of ignorance.¹⁸

It is theoretically ruled out that satyagraha would suppress any individual or organization. He clearly warned to the people in 1940 that whosoever is going to launch satyagraha without adequate preparations would bring disaster to the cause he is fighting for. At the same time he was also prepared to say that a votary of satyagraha even he is wrong can cause no harm to others. Rather the biggest advantage he found with satyagraha was that if rightly practiced, it will surely yield justice but if abused, it is harmless to anyone. Thus he accepted that despite the possibility of its being abused, satyagraha is the most harmless as also the most potent remedy against wrongs.¹⁹ He further mentioned that satyagraha involves no secret. The fact of having or keeping secrets will imply the existence of fear. Whereas fearlessness is one of the most

important conditions of satyagraha. Not only a satyagrahi should be fearless, he also ought not to have any kind of distrust in his opponent. Having basic distrust would mean, denying the divine nature of the opponent.

Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for, an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed. No matter how often a satyagrahi is betrayed, he will repose his trust in the adversary so long as there are not cogent reasons for distrust...He will not...be misled by the mere fear of suffering into groundless distrust...Distrust is a sign of weakness and satyagraha implies the banishment of all weakness, and, therefore, of distrust, which is clearly out of place when the adversary is not to be destroyed but to be won over.²⁰

Thus a satyagrahi carries out his work "in the light of the blazing sun of openness".

After having considered some of the possible abuses of satyagraha I now proceed to understand the limits set by Gandhi for satyagraha. The limits will have to be outlined with specific reference to the various built in devices. Fasts, for example, are coercive when they are intended to attain a selfish end. It is indeed difficult to draw a line between selfish and unselfish ends. However, the one who thinks that someone is fasting for a selfish end should resolutely refuse to yield to the coercion of fast. Thus satyagraha of this type is limited by its very object.

The device of non-co-operation is limited by the pledge of non-violence, non-co-operation without the limits of non-violence will turn out to be licence instead of being a duty. Here again to draw a strict line might be difficult but there cannot be any escape from drawing the line, howsoever the line it may be.

Civil disobedience is limited by the fact that a person has learned to obey intelligently, truly and willingly the laws of society, then only he can proceed to disobey certain unjust and immoral laws. The one who is not voluntarily obeying laws has no right to judge laws as good or bad.

The general limit prescribed by Gandhi is the self-sacrifice and self-suffering.

Now in the background of the limits and possible abuses of the doctrine of satyagraha, one can raise a question whether there should be some specific limits for the practice of satyagraha in a democratic body politic like India has ?

Mr. N.V.Gadgil²¹ maintained that in a parliamentary or constitutional

democracy any kind of satyagraha is unjustified. Any attempt to launch whether violent and non-violent satyagraha is likely to weaken the foundation of democratic set up, which would eventually result in anarchy. Mr. K. Santhanam²² has also maintained that a general or mass satyagraha is unjustified against a democratic government. However, he is not so strong in his opinion as Mr. Gadgil is, because he makes room for very specific cases. He concedes that individual satyagraha has some place in a democratic system as a corrective measure against the misuse of political power.

Thus most constitutionalists either deny any place or give a very limited place for the practice of satyagraha in a democratic set up. There are even some Gandhian like K.G. Mashruwalla also maintained that Gandhi would not have permitted the practice of satyagraha in a popularly elected political framework.

There is another extreme of Gandhians who accepts a full fledged practice of satyagraha with all its devices in a democratic set up. Mr. S.G. Bharve has argued this position in his article on "Satyagraha and Democracy".²³ According to him satyagraha is not merely a political weapon and therefore cannot be restricted to any particular group or system.

The aim of satyagraha as proclaimed by Gandhi was the upholding of truth and to maintain the rule of truth. Given this there is no reason to think that it cannot be or should not be practiced in democracy. It is rather open to practice under all kinds of regimes.

Gandhi's own writings do not solve this tricky problem. One can find his sayings on both sides. In 1919 before Hunter Committee he asserted the necessity of satyagraha in opposition to a "full, responsible self-Government". "I can imagine a state of things in this country which would need satyagraha even under Home Rule".²⁴ "My non-violence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions which must arise when India has become free".²⁵ Contrary to these sayings in 1946 he declared that "total non-violent non-cooperation has no place in popular Raj, whatever its level may be".²⁶

Considering the fact that Gandhi always maintained that he was continuously engaged in improving the doctrine of satyagraha, it would be reasonable to pay due attention to his sayings of 1946. In case of this, it would be again reasonable to interpret Gandhi on the side of caution. Surely theoretically he did not rule out the possibility of launching

satyagraha under a democratic society but he also firmly held that in a popular self-rule the necessity and occasions for satyagraha should be minimal. The greater the occasions are for launching satyagraha proportionately there would be doubts about the democratic nature of the Government.

Satyagraha, in the final analysis, was considered by Gandhi a revolutionary approach of transforming a system totally by changing the attitude of the people. The change in attitude is to be brought about by a change in value system. In case of democracy if the desirable value-structure has been accepted and incorporated in the living by people at large, ^{then} the fierce type of satyagraha would not be required. Only on those occasions where a particular law conflicts with the conscience of individual satyagraha with one of its appropriate devices could be used for a very very specific and limited purpose.

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CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I

Gandhi has been crowned as the 'Father of the Indian Nation'. It, however, does not mean that his impact was confined to India only. Transcending all barriers Gandhi's impact has reached all corners of the world. He undoubtedly possessed baffling personality. On the one hand he was thought as shrewd and seasoned politician whereas on the other hand he called himself a searcher after God. Scholars and academicians in this country, have not taken much interest in Gandhian theory. Perhaps because he never thought of himself as a scholar. However, the voluminous writings produced by him is bewildering. In my opinion a proper orderly understanding of his life, activities and thought is possible only when attempts are made to work out his metaphysical foundations. I do not make a claim that in this dissertation I have exhaustively worked out his metaphysical presuppositions. All that I claim is that I have attempted one step in this direction.

Gandhi, as I understand, is basically a moral and political thinker. Of course for Gandhi there is no fundamental difference between morality and religion. Morality is the essence of religion. Failure to recognise the intimate relationship between religion, politics and morality

in Gandhi's thought, is bound to result in a misunderstanding of his theory. Some authors have attempted to argue that Gandhi, as a person and his theory was a product of historical conditions. Others have tried to explain his theory in psychological terms. Both these undermine the importance of Gandhi as a philosopher and also contain a suggestion that Gandhi and his thought has outlived its utility. Contrary to these, in my dissertation I have tried to argue that Gandhism has a role even today in our democratic set up and also presents a powerful vision for future. Understood in this sense Gandhi's importance and place in the world of philosophy is no less significant than Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Manu and Kautilya.

Gandhi's thinking in my opinion is essentially based on Hindu-Buddhist metaphysical presuppositions. He himself has explicitly said that main ideas of his theory are not his own in the sense that he did not produce them for the first time. They are his ideas because he tried to evolve a pattern of life which could actually be lived on the basis of these ideas. Thus Gandhi evolved a unique moral system of his own on the root ideas of Hindu-Buddhist tradition. No doubt he was constantly inspired by Hinduism, but he also equally participated in various metaphysical and

epistemological controversies going on in the realm of Hindu thought. He tried to interpret Buddhism, Jainism and all other such isms within a larger framework of Hindu tradition. In Hinduism, to be more precise in sanatan dharma, he found out a larger framework of integrating all offshoots of Hinduism. To do this kind of work itself is a great philosophical contribution to Indian tradition. It is a fact that Kant earned a great place in philosophy because of his synthesis of rationalism and empiricism. If so, Gandhi in working out a uniform basis for Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism has done nothing less than what Kant did to Western Philosophy

Gandhi forcefully argued that morality has to occupy the central place in understanding man, nature and society. For Gandhi man is a value concept. Man is distinguishable from animals only to the extent he has grown morally upward. He deduced it from the concept of moral man that man has to necessarily engage himself into an active life devoted to social reconstruction and upliftment of masses. In his life style, he did demonstrate the truth of this. It enabled him to get the title of Karmayogi.

Regarding the foundation of morality, he maintained that truth which is the eternal law and known as dharma in Hindu tradition, is source

of all morality. In this sense Truth, God or Dharma becomes first major pillar of his thought. In the history of moral and political thought perhaps except Plato none else insisted on truth as much as Gandhi did. Absolute truth was considered, by him as highest among human ends, that is not only a moral end but also a social end. Thus he attempted at a uniform basis of individual and social morality. On the same ground he argued against the distinction of public and private morality. There are debates in realm of morality but one set of rules being superior to other set. Thereby posing a problem of choice. Truth as a source of morality was uncomprisable for Gandhi. It transcends all defects and sectarian considerations. Consequently, morality originating from this cosmic law of moral is bound to be for mankind. He in fact recommended that entire mankind should be treated as one human group and be guided by this moral law.

Moral law or truth being cosmic in character is embodied in every being of the cosmos. Man being the part of this cosmos embodies it. However, the knowledge of Truth is not automatic to everybody. Every individual has to procure this hidden treasure inside, Gandhi went one step ahead and maintained that man's moral growth is directly proportionate to his acquired knowledge of truth. Man in order to have some purpose or meaning of life should

make it obligatory on himself to seek more and more knowledge of Truth. The knowledge acquired of truth always remains relative. So there is no one who can claim finality about the knowledge of truth. Epistemologically it would keep man a life long seeker. In other words it would ensure his life long continuous growth. If in this framework that I have tried to interpret and organise Gandhi's ideas in a systematic manner.

In the first chapter, it has been argued that Gandhi is a philosopher and deserves a serious philosophical consideration. He can be best described as a moral and political thinker. The central concepts of his thinking are Truth and Non-violence. The non-recognition of the centrality of these would lead to a misunderstanding of Gandhi's thought.

The 2nd chapter deals with the concept of truth. Truth has been analysed as a source or essence of morality. Truth has been shown as highest among human ends. It is the most fundamental principle which includes all other principles. It also exists independently of human beings. It amounts to maintaining that truth is an objective and impersonal reality. I have also tried to trace the origin of this concept of truth in Indian tradition.

A distinction between absolute truth and relative truth has also been drawn.

The absolute knowledge of truth is an impossibility in Gandhi's scheme.

Relative knowledge of truth, therefore, has to be the basis of our day to day

work. Acceptance of relativity of knowledge leads one to develop the virtue

of tolerance, ability to make adjustments and openmindedness which are most

essential for a peaceful living. It ^{has} also been shown that for obtaining the

knowledge of truth, Gandhi required the concept of conscience. He did not

support rationalism or empiricism as epistemological theories regarding the

knowledge of truth.

In the third chapter I have analysed and explicated the concept of non-violence. The attempt has been made to show the intimate connection between truth and non-violence. Non-violence is generally understood as a negative concept. However, Gandhi made a radical change in the concept and gave it a positive content that is love or charity. The various aspects of the application of non-violence ranging from domestic affairs to political affairs have been worked out.

The knowledge of truth alone makes a man non-violent. Hence, both these concepts are integrally related. Another implication of it is that man's

being non-violent is directly related to his moral growth. Relative truth when lived in day to day life automatically makes a man more and more moral. Not giving up violence would throw a man towards the animal world. Man's manliness consists only in being non-violent. Finally, in this chapter I have tried to show that although Gandhi pleaded for non-violence as an absolute principle, yet he accepted that perfect non-violence is perhaps impracticable. Consequently, in his system a place has to be made for unavoidable violence.

The fourth and fifth chapters are devoted to an examination of the doctrine of satyagraha. Specially in the fourth chapter, I have first distinguished passive resistance from satyagraha and then went ahead to argue that satyagraha is a quite broad doctrine which includes civil disobedience and non-co-operation.

The various ingredients of these practices have been highlighted and examined. The conditions of launching satyagraha and rules to be observed by a Satyagrahi have been also studied. This leads one to discuss the significance and scope of the doctrine of satyagraha in the fifth chapter. While studying significance it was found that the idea of self awareness and self-suffering are essential to the doctrine of satyagraha. I have also examined the controversy

regarding the limits and possible abuses of this doctrine. Gandhi had undoubtedly a supreme faith in the doctrine of satyagraha. He called it a matchless weapon but for its practice both at the level of individual and masses he recommended very stringent conditions. Related to this is the problem of efficacy and desirability of satyagraha. With regards to desirability of satyagraha specially in a democratic set up I have pointed out the ongoing controversy between constitutionalists and some of the Gandhians. My own understanding has been that there will be a very limited use possible of satyagraha in a democratic set up. Finally I have maintained that in the doctrine of satyagraha Gandhi presented before the world a unique revolutionary method of changing a society. The process of social reconstruction with the method of satyagraha has to begin by affecting a change in the heart and attitude of the opponent.

II

It is more or less a rule that anyone who puts forward a revolutionary approach and new outlook for looking at the problems of man, politics and society, faces a tremendous opposition. Gandhi was no exception to this. His contemporaries did not spare him from scathing criticism. Mr. B. C. Pal, in 1919 attacked Gandhi by saying that he is offering a 'magic' and not the 'logic' to the country. Even a person like Rabindra Nath Tagore thought that Gandhi's

theory and practice of non-co-operation was based on anti-intellectual approach. Indian Muslim League leader Mr. Jinnah accused him of being a communalist by calling him a Hindu leader. Marxists say that his thinking was reactionary and he was championing the cause of vested interests. To militant Hindus, he was a friend of Muslims and Pakistan. Still for others he was not a thinker but just a master political strategist.

I wish to submit, there is an endless list of hostile reactions for Gandhi's thought and practice. Although it is not possible to examine all such criticisms one by one in a limited work like the present one, yet, I wish to point out that all the objections owe their origin to fundamental misunderstanding of the basic fibre of Gandhi's thought. Anyway, I would surely like to devote myself in this part of the chapter to some of the major criticism levelled against the doctrine of satyagraha.

Mr. Weatherly criticised Gandhi by saying that his non-co-operation was a way of violence and not of love. It is rather an appeal in the end of violence to reason.¹ Gandhi vehemently denied that satyagraha necessarily involves violence. It may appear so because the active quality of love may

cannot be inferred from the act of satyagraha itself. But otherwise conceptually it does not entail any kind of violence. He of course conceded that in case satyagraha is prematurely taken recourse to, it may yield to violence. But then this is not a wrong in theory, it is rather an error of judgement on the part of the practitioners. Gandhi has very clearly laid down the pre-requisites and rules to be followed by a satyagrahi. He strongly pointed out that Indian's salvation lies only in choosing satyagraha or soul force to fight ills of society and alien political power.

Shri Jamshed Mehta strongly criticised Gandhi in 1937. He argued that satyagraha has produced indiscipline and hatred among people and has also led to indiscriminate breaking of laws. He felt that Gandhi must bear the responsibility for the misuse of "this pointed bayonet of satyagraha".²

Here once again we find that objection is not to the doctrine of satyagraha as such but the question is raised about the consequence of satyagraha perhaps on a particular occasion or on a specific occasion. Gandhi argued that the outcome of such consequence is surely bad. But then it happens only when a misguided use of satyagraha is made. He surely maintained that the abstaining from violence does not mean abstaining merely from physical violence. The workers must repent for their wrong doings in thought, speech and deeds.

Most of the objections to satyagraha are of this nature which points to undesirable results when it is applied to masses. However, there were not many who questioned the value and legitimacy of the doctrine if applied at the individual level or mass level after due preparations. Gandhi's experience at South Africa regarding satyagraha were quite encouraging. But in Indian soil satyagraha did not readily take roots as it did in South Africa. Philip Spratt has rightly pointed out that the struggle launched in South Africa is actually a model of what satyagraha ought to be. He said;

It was conducted against very heavy odds by poor and ignorant people- the majority indeed were illiterate- but there was hardly an instance of breach of the principles. It dragged on in all for eight years: the longest fight he has ever conducted. People became disheartened. At one time he could count upon only sixteen followers. But in the end the "law of growth" prevailed. Almost the whole community again entered the fight, and satisfactory terms were obtained. He was left with an apparently immovable faith in the capacity of ordinary poor people to undergo these trials and to observe the principles; and a no less indestructible faith in the efficacy of the method.³

But in case of India due to the varied political influences and view points it was rather more difficult to establish satyagraha as a successful political weapon. The time required to establish it as an adequate method was not available to Gandhi. The urbanized elites had their own ego and were under the corrupt influence of religion. Religion which was a constant source of inspiration to Gandhi, was not available to city elites in purest form as

it was to uneducated village masses. Giving expression to his feeling in 1925 he wrote: "Much corruption has crept into our religion. We have become lazy as a nation, we have lost the time sense. Selfishness dominates our action. There is mutual jealousy amongst the tallest of us. We are uncharitable to one another."⁴ Thus the capital of character which was Gandhi's doctrine of satyagraha always presupposed was a commodity especially among so called advanced and educated Indians. Hence it always created difficulties in the practice of satyagraha in India and brought out several times several undesirable consequences. His disgust was so much that in the later years of his life he thought that English people and American Negroes might carry the tradition of satyagraha and not Indians.

Now I shall take up some of the objections that were levelled against the theoretical aspect of the doctrine.

After reading Hind Swaraj in 1910 Mr. Wybergh wrote to Gandhi that soul force or passive resistance has nothing to do with spirituality as claimed by Gandhi. He said:

In advocating these things instead of physical force you are only transferring the battle and the violence from the physical to the mental plane. Your weapons are mental and psychic, not physical, but also not spiritual. You are still fighting to win, and fighting harder than ever, and, in my opinion, all fighting in modern times is tending to become more and more a matter of intellectual and psychic force and less of physical force. It is not thereby becoming more moral or less cruel, rather the reverse, but it is becoming more effective.⁵

Mr. Wybergh of course never denied the unselfish sacrifice made by Gandhi and his followers. He did not suspect the motives but challenged his method. He even made a distinction between individual saintliness and political principles.

Gandhi in his reply pointed out that:

I admit that the term "passive resistance" is misnomer. I have used it because, generally speaking, we know what it means....The underlying principle is totally opposed to that of violence. It cannot therefore, be that the "battle is transferred from the physical to the mental plane". The function of violence is to obtain reform by external means; the function of passive resistance, i.e., soul-force, is to obtain it by growth from within, which, in its turn, is obtained by self-suffering, self-purification. Violence ever fails; passive resistance is ever successful. The fight of a passive resistance is none the less spiritual because he fights to win. Indeed, he is obliged to fight to win, i.e., to obtain the mastery of self. Passive resistance is always moral, never cruel, and any activity, mental or otherwise, which fails in this test is undoubtedly not passive resistance.⁶

Gandhi, as I have already explained in earlier chapters, was not prepared to accept the distinction between a saint and ordinary man or separation between religion and politics. He emphatically asserted this point in controversy with Tilak. In his considered opinion religion and politics are inseparable and modern civilization by separating is trying to achieve something impossible.

The similar criticism has been echoed by several others. It is

rather interesting to note that people from the domain of various religions were more hostile to Gandhi's doctrine than the secularists. In summarising a great deal of criticism of the doctrine of satyagraha one could outline two major points.

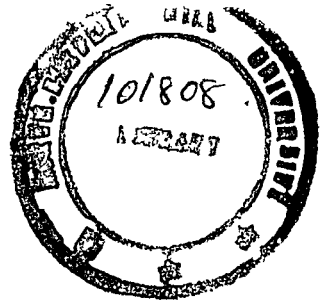
(i) That religious criteria applicable to saints cannot and should not be brought into the realm of mass political action and

(ii) Satyagraha is necessarily coercive method and, therefore, morally not very different or even superior than the other methods involving physical coercion.

The first point actually challenges the most basic point of his theoretical beginning. The important things in this context to note would be the fact of Gandhi's interpretation of the term 'religion'. Most religious leaders do make a distinction between 'Morality' and 'religion'. However, for Gandhi they were synonyms. Consequently, he argued that it is always possible to apply moral criteria to any aspect of human life. The objection is rooted in the acceptance of the distinction between 'religion' and 'moral', which was not the case in Gandhi's thought. The acceptance of the distinction and its application to Gandhi's thought is bound to produce misunderstanding.

Another debate centered around the doctrine of satyagraha is the presence of an element of coercion or compulsion. This objection seems to be mainly arising from an inherent ambiguity in the notion of coercion. It appears that Gandhi held a different notion of coercion than his opponents. He felt that in the absence of violence, both physical and mental, it is useless even misleading talk about coercion. However, the opponents of Gandhi generally understood by the term coercion the oppressive intentions of the user of the doctrine of satyagraha. In Gandhi's opinion satyagraha always has its aim of converting the opponent rather than coercing him. The conversion when it is impossible through the appeal to reason one has to achieve it through tapasya, i.e., self-suffering. Once he was told that in his Rajkot fast there was an element of "moral pressure". He replied: "If my fast....is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned".⁷ Thus in his opinion certain amount of moral pressure was justified if it evokes moral response from the opponents. That actually is not genuine coercion and to describe such a situation as coercive situation would be, in a wrong description and it can be done so by over stretching the meaning of the term coercion.

Finally, I will like to maintain that most objections to the theory



of Satyagraha are rooted in misunderstanding of fundamental premises of Gandhian thinking. It will not be out of place to point out that Gandhi should be regarded as one of the most outstanding contemporary Indian thinker. He built his system on existing tradition of Indian thought. I believe that philosophy is culture bound. Every great philosophical tradition derives its inspiration and substance from its cultural milieu. Seen in this light, Gandhism can be regarded as a revival and continuation of great ancient Indian tradition. He undoubtedly deserves the credit of intellectually re-interpreting and practically reinforcing the Indian tradition in Indian society and also showed the superiority in the sense that it is so broad based that it can accommodate good of every tradition.

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