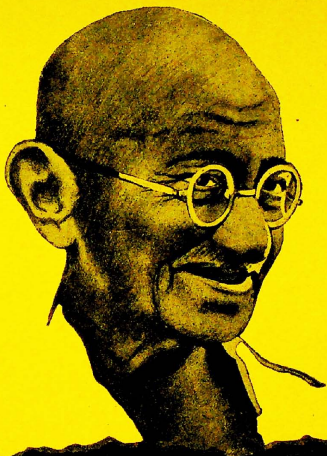


T. S. DEVADOSS



Mahatma Gandhi



UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

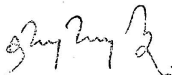
The Sakti Charities Endowment Lectures
1980-81

MAHATMA GANDHI

by

Dr T. S. DEVADOSS

அன்பளிப்பு



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MAHATMA GANDHI

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FOREWORD

This short book contains three lectures on Gandhi delivered by my colleague Dr T. S. Devadoss under the Sakti Charities Endowment for the year 1980-81 at this University. It is a scholarly work which throws new light on Gandhi's life and thought. Dr Devadoss has through this publication served a rich fare for those who are interested in the basic ideas of Gandhi, who enriched Indian and human heritage as much by his originality in thinking as by giving shape and form to ideas in action in all human activities. Here is a stimulating book which should be welcomed by all.

The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
Institute for Advanced Study in
Philosophy, University of Madras

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN
Director

P R E F A C E

I am indeed grateful to the authorities of our University for inviting me to deliver these lectures under the auspices of the Sakti Charities Endowment, instituted by Thiru N. Mahalingam, a devoted Gandhian.

It is as my humble tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi that I share with you, in these three Lectures, some of my elucidations on the supreme significance of the Mahatma's eternal message and its significant relevance to the present-day world.

The first lecture deals with the 'Dynamics of Gandhian Thought'. The purpose of this analysis is not to examine 'Gandhi's ideas in retrospect but in the perspective of the timeless values and verities for which he stood. We should approach Gandhi in a spirit of pure academic enquiry, and our purpose can be neither to bury him nor to praise him, but only to have an honest comprehension of his world view *vis-a-vis* the multitudinous tendencies of modernization. If systematically considered and suitably interpreted, Gandhi's heritage as a whole offers valuable insights for the proper understanding of the ills of contemporary civilization and the formulation of an alternative model of human settlement.

The second lecture deals with the 'Perspective of Man: Gandhi's View'. For Gandhi, the centrality of man permeated the entire canvas leading from ontology to human concern with the most ordinary needs or of the deepest, intellectual and spiritual striving. Man's complete living and self-realisation depend on the purposeful pursuit of the intrinsic values of life.

The concluding lecture deals with 'A Comparative Study of Gandhi with Christ and Karl Marx.' The greatest men of the world have been exemplars of the gospel of spiritual freedom. In the spiritual history of man, Lord Jesus Christ is really a stupendous fact and everyone ought

to face up to him. So was the case with Gandhi. If what is important in Christianity is the message of the Master and its application to life, then Gandhi is really the true follower of Jesus. The light of truth manifests in holy living. Christ and Gandhi have been the greatest exemplars of this Truth.

An attempt to compare the two eminent but diametrically opposite personalities — Gandhi and Marx — appears to be rather paradoxical. It is to be admitted that the application of Gandhian and Marxian principles and ideals has aroused and sharpened the consciousness of several crores of common people and let loose tidal waves of revolt and rebellion against the forces of justice and inhumanity. The central focus of my present analysis is not to evaluate whether it is Gandhi or Marx who provides a better alternative but to analyse their differences and to find out some similarities between them.

I might conclude this brief preface with a point that Gandhi is a subject which can never become outdated. He will continue to be relevant till humanism, betterment of the human condition, world peace, and conflict of resolution by non-violence continues to be relevant and urgently desirable. Let us catch the spirit of Gandhi's teaching and help to create the kind of society which Gandhi envisaged.

I am thankful to my esteemed Vice-Chancellor Dr. M. Santappa for publishing these lectures under the Post-Centenary Silver Jubilee Publications. To Mr. Justice T. Ramaprasada Rao, Thiru C. K. Kumaraswamy, the Registrar and Dr. R. Balasubramanian, Director, The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, I offer my heartfelt thanks for having presided over the first, second and third day lectures respectively. To friends, students, and colleagues who attended my lectures, I owe my thanks. My thanks to my wife T. Raja Kumari for her kindness in preparing the index and to Avvai Achukoodam for their neat and expeditious printing.

The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute
for Advanced Study in Philosophy,
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T. S. DEVADOSS

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THE SAKTI CHARITIES ENDOWMENT LECTURES
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
1979 — 1980

LECTURE I

THE DYNAMICS OF GANDHIAN THOUGHT

Within three and half decades of Gandhi's exit from this world, we find that most men are seized with fatigue towards idealism in life and do not attach the same significance, value and validity to his teachings. While some contend that we have deviated from the path shown by him, others apprehend that there might be a swing of the pendulum in the other direction in the near future. It is, therefore, absolutely essential to consider the basis on which fundamental values of life depend for their acceptance by the common individual. To-day, we find that most people look forward to a prospect of material gains, a few do consider and observe these values for their own intrinsic worth. True understanding of values will always reveal that all efforts as to ends and utility can be understood only as standing, in the last analysis, in the service of intrinsic values (*eigenwerte*). The latter alone are able to fulfil life. Each sacrifice which we make for anyone else — a sacrifice which an artist or scientist would ordinarily make only with extreme effort — has meaning only if our effort is directed at something regarded as in itself valuable and thus worth attaining — something which is simply there and which we know is worth living for.

Profound human understanding seems especially attainable in the sphere of valuation because only there does man speak to us in his completeness and entirety. His most secret impulses are revealed there. The reason for this is precisely that values are grounded in the most profound spiritual insights, in the innermost human intentions. Let us remember, that at all times and in all cultures the decisive impulses in human behaviour proceed from basic valuations, that any period is

conditioned by the value-aspirations dominant at the time, and that the values involved are rooted in man's ultimate understanding of Being.

Gandhi always stressed the imperative need for raising the moral stature of human beings. He was equally conscious of raising their standards of material wellbeing. I, for one, believe that we cannot forget, except at our own peril, the life and teachings of Gandhi which are in essence, so fundamental, so noble and so basic to our way of life. He was unique in that he dealt with matters of the spirit, soul and conscience together with social and political affairs in the most natural and unconscious manner.

One would pick up Gandhi's thoughts and precepts and study them each afresh and seek to assess and evaluate each facet with its intrinsic characteristic. Like Moses, Gandhi put out whole tabernacles of commandments for each individual, obligations to himself as to his fellow beings.

Many would not expect to find in Gandhi the acumen of a professional academician nor would he himself, needless to say, have made any such claim. And yet, it is remarkably great to find the number of issues which astonish contemporary thinkers on which he has left behind a supreme heritage of thought. It is true that he wrote profusely, writing was not a mental exercise for him. It was only a corollary to action. His life, his way of living, his programme of action to meet a situation or a challenge, those were his true expressions. They were inextricably related to what he was engaged in doing and only in that context do they fall into the proper perspective and become meaningful.

U.N. Dhebar, who was a close associate of Gandhi, rightly pointed out that while one aspect of Gandhi's life has been acclaimed by all, that is, his role as the liberator of India, and while his contribution to the cause of peaceful evolution of human society in so far as he gave to mankind a new weapon for achieving social, political and economic justice has also been duly acknowledged, his contribution in two other fields is practically being by-passed even by those who are close followers of his. These two fields are his economic approach and the modalities of his action in the sphere of the socio-spiritual re-making of

society. Thinkers quarrel with him for bringing religion and mysticism into politics. To his critics, Gandhi's reply is: 'Politics bereft of religion is a death-trap for it kills the soul.' Gandhi's acceptance of spiritual determination gave him supreme faith in the inevitable emergence of the non-violent society in the future. The notion of inevitability is a consequence of Gandhi's faith in the redeeming power of the spirit. Gandhi's theory of ethicization and spiritualization of politics certainly represents a great land-mark in the direction of political 'idealism'.

A religious man to the core

Religion is the discipline by which we are helped to overcome, the discord in our nature and strengthen our personality. Gandhi was essentially a religious person. By the observance of spiritual truths, by fasts and prayers, he aimed at the establishment of a new type of human race, fearless, greedless and hateless.

Religion occupies such a place in man's life that Aristotle already saw in it the most outstanding feature of our species, viz., 'Anthropos zoon Metaphysicon' — man is a metaphysical animal. This universal presence of a religious inspiration in human life has been confirmed by a Surate of the *Koran*, which provides a magnificent foundation for a truly universal oecumenism. 'There is no nation which did not receive from God its Prophet.' Certainly, India as aptly described by Swami Vivekananda, "the blessed *punya-bhūmi* is the land from where came the founders of religions from the ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth."² She has stood like a 'Rock of Ages' and has survived the ravages of time because her civilization which is inspired by the insight of holy men is marked by a certain moral integrity, a fundamental loyalty, a fine balance of individual desires and social demands. It is through this sustaining power that India has preserved through tumultuous ages the eternal words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great spiritual preceptors — *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*: Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinitude; *śāntam śivam advaitam*.³ Ātman which is Brahman is free from desire and aversion, is blissful consciousness and is absolute.

In India, great philosophers and prophets have shown that the central conception of religion is that of the Eternal. The test of

religion is realization (*anubhūti*). 'The Ātman is to be seen,' says the *Upaniṣad*.⁴ Thus we find that spirituality has been the core of religion in India. Spirituality has formed the backbone of India. It has left an indelible impression, not only upon her social structure, but also upon her many cultural achievements.

Cultural achievements

To the modern world professing atheism, vitalism, agnosticism, mechanism, and realism, Gandhi's has been the most determined attempt to bring into focus the substantive rationality of the ancient religious and moral tenets. Being a votary of the creative rôle of spiritual ideas, Gandhi stood as a critic of the occidental philosophers who are unmindful of the workings of the soul-force in human society.

The Gītā: Gandhi's dictionary of action

It should be remembered that Gandhi was, in religion, a man of action without attachment and, therefore, his entire philosophy of life was derived ultimately from the *Gītā* on which he relied for his strength. He called it 'his dictionary of action.'

The *Gītā* describes the spiritual ideal under four different names: the man of steadfast wisdom (*sthita-prajña*, II 55-73), the man of yogic concentration (*yogārūḍha*, VI — 4-32), the God-lover (*bhakta*, XII — 13-20) and, lastly, the man who has transcended the three aspects of nature (*guṇātīta*, IV, 22-27).

Gandhi sought all this in life to attain the above described states of consciousness and poise. That every man is equal in the eyes of God was also learnt by Gandhi by studying the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā* made Gandhi to understand that all work, whether pleasant or unpleasant, should be performed in the sense of duty. The implication behind this statement is that work by itself is neither high nor low, but the preference of the ego evaluates all work according to his whims. We should understand that the sense of duty teaches us to disregard the false values which the ego has attached to life and work. This negation of the ego and its values is also the transcendence of the ego itself. This helps us to realize the second characteristic of the *sākṣin*, namely, freedom from limited vision or, what amounts to the same thing, getting actions or by being unattached to

them, we are asked to realize the first characteristic of *sākṣin*, namely detachment. The only condemnation the *Gītā* makes of those who work with various selfish motives is that they are men of small understanding (*krpāṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ*), and defines *Karma-yoga* as dexterity in action (*yogaḥ karmasu kausalam*). The *Gītā* extols this attitude in these words:

The wise, possessed of this evenness of mind, abandoning the fruits of their actions, freed for ever from the fetters of life, attain that state which is beyond all evil.

Gandhi learnt from his study of the *Gītā* that man has to rise above even this duty and work as a free being. The *Gītā* devotes many passages to describe this stage beyond duty — the plane in which Buddhas and Christs live. When one attains the *sākṣin* — consciousness, he finds life in an entirely new perspective. All the false values which the ego had attached to life and its functions get destroyed, and they reveal themselves in their true forms. Such a life, Gandhi understood, is the acme of ethical perfection. They are in the words of the *Gītā*, *sarvabhūtahite rataḥ* (ever interested in the good of all beings) and their actions and thoughts have always only one reference, *lokasaṅgrahārtham* (the welfare of all). Truly has it been said by Lord Jesus and recognised by Gandhi that such men are the salt of the earth.

Gandhian thought is considered as a creative blend of all humanistic and altruistic tendencies of the age. It refuses to be satisfied with the progress and well-being only of a class or a nation. It advocates the good (*hita*) and the emancipation of all living beings or *sarvabhūtahita* in the language of the *Gītā*.

Gandhi finds the deeper meaning of all life's activities in the teachings of the *Gītā*. Gandhi says that in whatever position of life we may be, to whatever creed or religion we may belong to, the *Gītā*'s teaching is unlimited in its scope. All that one has to do is to shift one's centre of individuality to the *sākṣin*, then alone one will go beyond all the dualities and struggles of life, and attain universality of outlook and breadth of heart.

Today, all noble minds are agreed that there is no way out except by universal upheaval not alone in the political sense, but brought

about by the spontaneous renewal and flow of spiritual dynamism in individuals. The *Gītā* has shown us the path to progress and perfection. The brotherhood of man is no longer a sentimental dream, but is proving an inevitable condition of life security, which ensures the endurance of peace; for this an alert conscience is demanded of the man with a deep conviction that the pursuit of a safe and true policy should transcend the romanticism of nationalistic doctrines.

We have attained material universalism. But, at the height of our achievement, man's creations threaten to annihilate him. At the zenith of the age of reason and advancement, we are confronted by a horror of our own making, and we are suffering from a great spiritual darkness. The world is covered with darkness and the road of escape is not visible and further outlook is unsettled, night covers the day, but reveals a Universe, starry heavens above and the moral law within.

Gandhi foresaw that no state can ignore the ethical and spiritual welfare of the individual and of the nation, for, man is rooted in divinity and his spiritual hunger cannot be satisfied by a soulless humanistic ethics, however lofty. "True religion and true morality," said Gandhi "are inseparably bound up with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil." If a change of heart has to take place in every one of us, it can come only through a broad conception of Vedānta morality which Gandhi adopted in life.

The basic philosophy which inspired Gandhi is, of course, the *philosophia perennis* which Hinduism teaches in its loftiest form known as Vedānta. Gandhi said: "I believe in Advaita. I believe in the essential unity of man, and for that matter of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that, if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent." The Advaita doctrine of *sarva-mukti* (release of all) lays the spiritual foundation for Gandhian thought. According to the Advaitic view, no single individual soul is finally released until all souls are released. The great souls like the Buddha, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi were always concerned with the welfare of all.

Service: the best worship of God

'Jīva is Śiva,' observed Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in an equation, and added, drawing its corollary: 'The service of *jīva* is

therefore the worship of Śiva.' If the worship of God as a symbol, or an image can elevate a man spiritually, how much more spiritually efficient must be the worship of Him in man! Service rendered in a spiritual attitude, Swami Vivekananda held, uplifted both the giver and the receiver.

Now the question we have to consider is how does this aspect of Swamiji's teachings influence the present age? As a result of the growth of democracy which gives essential value to the dignity of human personality, the ideal of service from the political point of view gains a significant meaning at present. The goal of democracy is to seek the welfare of all. Swami Vivekananda's ideal of service to the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted has become a living religion of India at present.

In fact, the worship of the poor the 'Daridranārāyaṇa' as visualised by Swami Vivekananda has been expressed practically by Gandhi in his campaign of the uplift of the *Harijans*. Gandhi held that by doing service in a spirit of reverence, an individual not only ensures the welfare and happiness of his fellow human beings, but also gains in spiritual stature himself. Vivekananda echoed the same truth thus: *ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca* — 'For one's own spiritual freedom and the welfare of the world.'

The nation today needs to hearken to the dynamic message of Swami Vivekananda. The message proclaims: 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

Love is life, expansion; hatred is death, contraction; service is expansion of the inner man, exploitation is his contraction. Renounce the limited self and manifest the higher self through love and service, says Swami Vivekananda. 'Unless he erects himself, how poor a thing is man' sings William Wordsworth.

It should be understood that all our political and social processes, all our scientific and religious programmes, can have no nobler aims than these two — viz., renunciation and service. The sooner we consciously lend our energies in this higher direction, the wiser we shall show ourselves to ourselves and to keenly observant world. It is in this high

orientation of national energies and purposes that our nation will receive an invaluable direction from the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Gandhi.

Albert Schweitzer and several other Christian interpreters of Gandhian thought consider the emphasis on social service to be indicative of Christian influence on Gandhi. It should, however, be noted that the old Mahayana concept of *Mahākaruṇa* was imbibed by Gandhi. In his emphasis that service to living beings results in God-realization (*mokṣa*), Gandhi attempts to give a modern realistic interpretation of the above concept of *Mahākaruṇa*. He is attempting in a sense, to concretize at social and political levels the ideals of *Bodhisattva*. Gandhi's ideal, thus, is an extension of that of Maitreya. He is not content with only the form of a pure and good will but wants to fulfil that moral will with the contents of humanitarian duties and altruistic virtues.

Service based on love

Gandhi's ideal of service was based on the principles of love. Gandhi's maiden book *Hind Swaraj* concluded with three basic tenets of the Law of Love. They are: (a) real home-rule is self-rule or self-control; (b) the way to it is passive resistance: that is soul-force or love-force; and (c) in order to exert this force, *swadeshi* is in every sense necessary.

Let us recall, an interesting historical incident in Gandhi's life. Gandhi's invention and leadership of the non-violent border crossing in history from the Natal into Transvaal, on the morning of 6th November 1913 which were about to occur. The basis of the action is significant. On the eve of the march, Gandhi made a last appeal to his opponent, General Smuts: "We could not command any other sanction but that of love."

Although the 'Great March' ended in less than a week with the arrest and deportation of all the two thousand, it was instrumental in achieving the Provincial settlement in the Gandhi—Smuts Agreement. Only three months later, i.e., on 22nd January 1914, in what became typical of the closing of a successful non-violent campaign, Gandhi left a loving relationship with his former opponents. Both of the hardened Boer generals leading the country, Botha and Smuts, sent

him farewell tributes. Gandhi gave Smuts a pair of home-made sandals which the General wore for over twenty-five years until Gandhi's seventieth birthday, when he returned them as a gesture of friendship with the message, "I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."¹⁰ Recalling those negotiations, Smuts said that Gandhi never forgot the human background of the situation and never lost his temper or succumbed to hate. He recalls that Gandhi's manner and spirit always contrasted markedly with the ruthless and brutal forcefulness which is in vogue in our present day society. This is really a significant testimony from a philosopher-statesman who was involved in some of the most important international events of his day.

We should note here briefly that Gandhi's second *satyāgraha* campaign was conducted in London, where he successfully opposed the British Army in war-time. Arriving on the outbreak of World War I, Gandhi had again volunteered the service of Indians in a medical corps, hoping to 'convert' the British 'by love'. However, when the unit was placed in a British training camp in October 1914 and subjected to 'absurd orders' and privileges for the Young Oxford students put over them, Gandhi staged a "miniature *satyāgraha*".¹¹ This followed a model course of contact with the commander, reasonable negotiations, appeal on failure to the India Office at cabinet level and final resolution to everyone's satisfaction. This is cited as a little-known example of the complex high-level diplomacy in which Gandhi dealt with a foreign country in the midst of war, always acting with the *Law of Love*.¹²

Gandhi's technique of love provides us with an ideal which we could have before us throughout all our activities in life. There is hardly a *weltanschauung* (a world-view) known to man which does not recognise that it would be eminently desirable if a relationship of love could be brought about between man and his fellow beings. Such a state of affairs would make conflicts, including the major conflicts of war, impossible. Can we bring about a change in this direction? The rifts between what people do and say, the conflicts between men who have diverse beliefs and who may even clash with each other in the name of religion, the failure of organizations to live up to the ideals of their founders, the case with which organization for violence takes precedence over organization for peace — all this is commonly known

to all of us. And yet, Gandhi was a man who believed that in spite of all the conflicts that take place between man and man "in the ultimate resort it is the power of love that acts in the midst of the clash and sustains the world."¹³ Gandhi declared, "Man's nature is not essentially evil, brute nature has been known to yield to the influence of love. You must never despair of human nature."¹⁴

The Law of Love

Gandhi like Immanuel Kant before him, has often been misunderstood by those who could see only the vigour of his thinking and who were somewhat repelled by it. Gandhi was by no means a Pelagian. In fact his approach to love has much in common with the religious view expressed in the word *agape*. *Eros* with its connotation of search for fulfilment was perhaps to him, an unwarranted luxury in a country where the weight of human suffering was so immense. It may be asked: What does love mean to Gandhi? He wrote: "I firmly believe in truth and love. And by love, I do not mean the love of the husband for the wife. Nor do I mean the love between the father and the son, for that too is based on self-interest. Love for me means the relationship between a devotee and his God."¹⁵

The method of conversion, Gandhi held is the way of love. He declared: "I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view, by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred."¹⁶ Genuine love is associated with *ahimsā*. "Love never claims, it ever gives. Love suffers, never resents, never revenges itself."¹⁷ The *New Testament* overtones are present in this passage too: "A man's first duty is to his neighbours...One to whom the whole world is as his family should have the power of serving the universe without moving from his place...All living beings are members of one family or other, so that a person's every act has a beneficial or harmful influence on the whole world."¹⁸

Love, for Gandhi, was based on faith in a twofold sense, faith in the essential goodness of man and faith in God. We have a need, Gandhi says, for "loving faith in the God of love and have therefore love for all mankind." For man, to love his brother whom he hath seen is to love God whom he hath not seen. But "...perfection in love or non-possession will remain an unattainable ideal as long as we are

alive; but it is this towards which we must ceaselessly strive." The way of love may not, indeed does not, prevail in the world as a whole. But a group of dedicated people who have the spirit of self-sacrifice and service can transform society just as yeast leavens dough. In this way, the spirit which moved Gandhi towards God can move through the relations which man has with his fellows. Such a spirit can encompass the diversity which characterizes men just as it is the very idiosyncrasies of the beloved which endear themselves to the lover. Gandhi, thus tried to establish the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. It was this kingdom of Heaven which Gandhi had in view all the time he was engaged in guiding the destinies of his countrymen.

Gandhi believed that it is quite possible to arouse the feelings of love and sympathy among men by persuasion and humility. He was therefore, against bearing hatred, ill-will and malice even towards enemies. He believed that the enmity of an opponent can be overcome by a sober and loving attitude towards him. Gandhi further maintained that hatred divides and separates men, while love joins and unifies them. Hatred is harmful in its effects while love is beneficial in its consequences. If the society is to survive and function well, we must encourage and foster the attitude of love, so that co-operation, rather than competition, would increase and a greater harmony could be produced in the society. We find that the competitive spirit, hatred, ill-will and malice are due to man's narrow egoistic attitude, and therefore Gandhi advocated the gradual suppression of the human ego so that man might realise his real self which can give him the experience of universal unity and harmony.

Gandhi was fully convinced that social relations based on boundless expectations and cravings of the ego can never develop a society which has its foundation in equality, mutuality, co-operation and brotherhood. All our dreams to evolve a democratic and socialistic society are doomed to failure if we do not have a sound base for such a society i.e. love (*prema*). Like Kropotkin, Gandhi believed that mutual aid and co-operation and affinity are the laws of nature. Gandhi did not agree with Charles Darwin that all life is essentially governed by conflict, competition and struggle.

The shape of the future of our country gives us much concern. With all the resources at our command, with all the gifts with which

we have been endowed, with all the powers that we have developed, we are unable to live in peace, love and safety. We seem to have grown in knowledge and intelligence but not in wisdom and virtue. For lack of the latter, things are interlocked in perpetual strife.

As Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan observes: "Great movements of spirit arise when despair at the breakdown of civilisation makes the mind susceptible to the recognition of the insufficiency of the existing order and the need for rethinking its foundations and shifting its bases. All that we need today is the recovery of faith."

The Dynamics of Truth and Non-violence

Truth, according to Gandhi, is revealed in the ordinary consciousness of the ordinary human being, and is not necessarily the discovery or achievement of a rarely gifted or blessed person. Gandhi observed: "Whatever is possible for me, is possible even for a child and I have sound reasons for saying so. The instruments for the quest of truth are as simple as they are difficult. They may appear quite impossible to an arrogant person and quite possible to an innocent child."¹ Gandhi would not have repeatedly stressed both the need and the possibility of realizing truth in thought, word and deed, if he had believed that truth was unattainable in that way by those whom he exhorted to pursue it. The faith that truth could be discovered in the affairs of common men and women was part of his nature. Otherwise, he would have turned his back on the hardships and sufferings of the toiling masses and sought truth in the solitude of a cell of forest. All his life he strove to help the downtrodden and helpless human beings to secure food, clothing and other necessities of life, as also freedom and enlightenment. All this was valuable to him, because it was the same as the search for truth. It was, he believed, utterly wrong to think that one had usually to violate the conditions of truthful behaviour to succeed in business or politics. In fact, politics has value for him because, according to Gandhi, it was vitally connected with religion. Truth, therefore, is from his point of view something which can be attained by common effort, known in common experience and expressed in common language.

So much is clear and presents no difficulty. But instances of common experience are not all of a piece. In general cases, one experiences

conflicts with another; in such cases, one truth seems to destroy another, and it is evident that what destroys truth cannot be truth. Hence, truth must be something which does not destroy itself; in Gandhi's words, 'it must be non-violent.' Non-violence in this sense is a fundamental feature of truth, and is different only in verbal form from consistency and harmony, which have been, since the beginning of speculative and theoretical thinking, regarded as the essential features of truth. How one defines truth depends on the way one experiences truth. Very often, it is felt as love, and then truth is identified with love. Gandhi described this feeling as non-violence or *ahimsā*, and identified truth with non-violence, though he sometimes spoke of non-violence in such a way as to suggest that it is the same as love.

Gandhi's point of view was that of the man of the world. He was primarily interested in dealing with the world as he encountered it from day to day. It can be said of Plato that he used the term 'the Good,' where he meant 'the Real,' of Gandhi too it can be said that he often spoke of 'the Truth' when he really meant 'the Good'. Gandhi was a man of action and not one of mere contemplation, hence it was natural for him to experience this harmony as the harmony between the will and the intention, the means and the end. His view about the relation between the means and the end has its source in this experience of harmony, but it is only of the forms in which he experienced it. Gandhi had also the experience of harmony between himself and God, and that was rather peculiar to him, between himself and his opponent. The consciousness in which he sought this harmony in serious crises was his 'inner voice'.

Ahimsā is a Sanskrit word meaning non-injury, non-killing, non-destruction. It can be traced to the *Vedas*. In the beginning it seems to have been negative in conception. However, it has now gathered a wider connotation and immense prestige, both religious, ethical and practical. However, it attained a special significance from Gandhi's use of it, both in its negative aspect of abstaining from injury to all sentient beings and even to property and things, and in its positive aspect of almost aggressive love which even sacrifices itself for the sake of benefit to the loved object.

The attitude of *ahimsā* towards sentient beings is an understandable proposition, as one can easily find out if the particular being is

suffering injury or not on account of anything that one may think, feel, say or do.

Perhaps *ahimsā* in action, in both its negative and positive aspects, is the very essence of Gandhi's approach to life, its problems and the relationships involved in one's life.

It should be noted that a person who is observing *ahimsā* as an ethical and spiritual discipline, has to observe it on the three levels of (1) action, (2) expression in words, and (3) in thinking and feeling. He has to be careful to see that he does not entertain thoughts and feelings of injury towards any sentient being.

Similarly, he has to see that he does not express anything in words which would injure the feelings of other beings. And last but not least, he has to abstain from every act which would be injurious to other beings.

It is interesting to note how Gandhi interpreted this threefold discipline of *ahimsā*. In December 1921, the Indian National Congress met in Ahmedabad, Gandhi's head quarters at that time. The British Government has thrown a challenge by banning the Congress volunteer organizations in three provinces. Gandhi accepted the challenge and decided to enrol 50,000 volunteers who would be pledged to *ahimsā* or non-violence. A pledge was drafted which said, "I will observe non-violence in thought, word and deed." Non-violence in word and deed was all right. But we were very much intrigued and thought that it was impossible to sign such a pledge conscientiously, as one could hardly be non-violent in thought. We discussed the matter among ourselves and then took it to Gandhi. He saw the point. He said that what he demanded from a real non-violent volunteer was that he should make up his mind not to entertain thoughts of violence against the Government and those who constitute the Government and the opponents. The importance lies in the definite direction of non-violence which the volunteer deliberately takes and his endeavour assiduously to stick to that direction. This satisfied 'doubting Thomases' and brought what was impossible within the realm of honest endeavour and practice."²

This would lead one to ponder over how human social ethics has been evolving in this respect. If 'tooth for a tooth and eye for an eye'

seemed to be natural justice, the injunction 'Thou shalt not kill' came into vogue in course of time. But a man is sure to kill one day if he went on cherishing hatred. Therefore, 'Thou shalt not hate' is a logical development if one is to be sure that there is to be no killing. 'Hate' however, is not only a negative conception but one which is the counterpart of 'fear'. It is therefore, necessary to replace it by 'Thou shalt love'. Love is identity.

Gandhi once declared that 'all life is one'. But these were not mere words to him; nor were they an intellectual concept and knowledge. Gandhi understood the deep significance of it and experienced spiritually the unity of life underlying the diversity of it. This inner experience of oneness could express it in love, that is, in identity of interest. How else can ultimate and basic identity of interest and its intimate experience express itself but in the form of selfless service, self-suffering and self-sacrifice, if need be, for the object of love. Gandhi identified himself with the whole of humanity, its trials and tribulations, its sufferings, and its aspirations.

Non-violence (*ahimsā*) both in its negative aspect of non-injury to sentient beings, and its positive aspect of love or identity of interest, inspired Gandhi's whole approach in the service of truth, the 'Law of Being' of humankind and its progress towards higher levels of living.

Gandhi's notion of *ahimsā* seem to be different from the Buddhist and the Jaina notion. While his *ahimsā* refers primarily to a characteristic of an internal state, the latter means mainly a definite attitude to external living substances. An appreciation of this fact will enable us to understand many aspects of his behaviour which otherwise would seem more like oddities and absurdities. For instance, it seemed strange to many, including his followers, that whenever he had to take important decisions regarding a new movement to be started or a crisis to be resolved, Gandhi relied more on his inner voice, than on any rational calculation of the pros and cons. But this was because it was only in his inner experience that he could know with certainty that the means which he intended to employ were in harmony with the end he sought to attain. An analysis of his experiences of inner harmony and strength and a conceptual formulation of their relations with his other experiences and behaviour would be a

major field of study in Gandhian philosophy. It would not only show the individual a way of controlling and organizing his experiences and behaviour but would also give us valuable suggestions regarding social planning and control.

Non-violence considered in this way is the attribute of truth; or to put it in Spinoza's language, it is what the mind perceives as the essence of truth. From the objective point of view, this attribute serves as the criterion for determining what is true and what is not. Engaged as Gandhi was mostly in social and political activity, truth was very often presented by him as a kind of social and political order.

'Truth is non-violent' means that truth does not destroy itself and, therefore, what destroys truth cannot be truth. Consequently, if two instances of truth conflict with each other, it becomes necessary to discover the instance nearer to the truth. Conscious search for truth is necessary when one stumbles upon an inconsistency and has the awareness that what he knows is not true. Gandhi's maxim for the discovery of truth in such cases is, "Do not start with any assumption or preconception about the nature of truth but discover it experimentally."

Social experiments on an extensive scale are by their very nature possible only in the practical field, and Gandhi was the first to use the experimental method in social life, in particular in its political and economic spheres. Experiments in practical life are naturally different from those in the theoretical sphere. The emphasis in the former is on controlling the conditions of behaviour so as to produce certain results, rather than on the mere observation of the results that follow from these conditions.

The corner-stone of Gandhi's philosophy is the idea of value — metaphysical unity, from which follows the fact that man's basic nature is socially good. This unity is the ideal of harmony.

Let us remember that Gandhian thought has no finality. It is always undergoing re-shaping. Gandhi's method of searching for the Truth is not merely deductive, he does not desire truth exclusively from something already given, like the unity of all life. As far as the content is concerned, Gandhi's methods are also inductive and are based upon an ever-widening series of experiences, even though it is

true that an experience essentially includes an inner experience, that is to say, a value — and norm — experience and a religious life. It is contended that as long as knowledge of Truth is interpreted absolutely, it has a normative component.

Gandhian concepts and values are dynamic and have an evolutionary dimension in the sense that they are developed through human experience.

Since God could neither be fully defined nor his existence proved or disproved, Gandhi reduced God and all other ontological categories to Truth to which the believer, the agnostic and the atheist could all subscribe.

An attempt has been made to define the Gandhian philosophy in terms of ontology, epistemology and method. It is not possible to go into all the evolutionary stages of Gandhian philosophy here. All that is needed here is to delineate the end product. Significantly, for Gandhi, ontology, epistemology and method are not different from one another. Each is a part of a single dynamic process.

Truth: the Source of all Values

In Gandhian philosophy, Truth is the source of all values in ethics and politics, as well as of authority. It is the existence as well as the *raison d'être* of existence. Truth is both being as well as knowledge, i.e., it is simultaneously ontological and epistemological. Truth is reality in all forms, including the existential, the transcendental, the spiritual reality, the moral order, etc. Truth in definition, can be absolute and complete but human experience of it is both limited and relative. Hence Gandhi makes a distinction between absolute Truth and relative Truth.

The significant contribution of Gandhi lies in that he attempted and achieved what no one could do before. Gandhi transformed so-called eternal values of the religion into relative truths of ethical principles and put them together as 'Ethical Religion'. By doing so, Gandhi removed the distinction between religion as such and the projection of ethical laws through morally justifiable social instruments into the realms of social action.

If Non-violence and Truth, were fundamental doctrines, Gandhi objectified these concepts by launching on *Satyāgraha*. If brotherhood was a universal principle, Gandhi formulated it into action by serving the lowest of the low and seeking their welfare (*antyodaya*). If equality and simplicity were laudable principles as answers to poverty, Gandhi adopted the loin cloth. Let us not repeat the same practices today. What we need to appreciate is how Gandhi not only brought precepts and practice close to one another but also showed that without right action there is no right precept. The cynicism and intellectual pessimism of the present century reveal the helplessness in action even when principles and precepts seem quite clear. Gandhi provides a revolutionary synthesis between the word and the act.

Gandhi was a practical idealist. But his idealism was a unique one. He challenged all idealistic philosophies because he rejected idealistic determinism. "And where do you find the seat of authority," Gandhi was asked, to which he replied, "It lies here", pointing to his breast. "I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason...I cannot surrender my reason whilst I subscribe to divine revelation. And above all, the letter killeth and the spirit giveth life."²¹

In substance, the most significant aspect of Gandhian approach is the evolutionary character of concepts which tends to blur the distinction between concepts and values. The Gandhian philosophy which reduces God to Truth gives Truth a value. The same is true of Non-violence. So Non-violence and Truth do not merely stand in the relationship of means to ends, but merge with and transform themselves into one another. Thus, Truth, the interchangeability of Ends and Means, Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* are fundamental Gandhian values. Besides these there are three other basic Gandhian concepts, namely *Swadeshi*, Bread-Labour, and Equality. Given the Gandhian unity of theory and practice, these concepts are also the core Gandhian values. These are six fundamental concepts-cum-values or value concepts which constitute the essence of Gandhi's philosophy and of his praxis.

Gandhi's values thus reflect his understanding of human nature, of social and production relations, of man's constant struggle against forces which tried to push him down into one kind of oppression or

another and of his attempts to rise above his existentialist situation. To Gandhi, morality is chiefly derived from Truth, which is unity. For this reason, it is significant to note that several virtues outlined by Gandhi, *viz.*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*, *brahmacarya*, and *abhaya* form an organic totality.

Gandhi was a moral genius. His contribution to the development of ethics is not to form clearly the final ideal, but to experiment 'step by step' advancing towards the goal, based on the principle of laying emphasis on the purity of means. Gandhian moral doctrine is teleological in principle, even though in actual practice, the main stress is upon the purity of means — "As the means, so the end." "Take care of the means, the end will take care of itself."¹¹

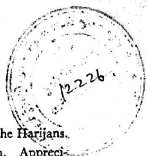
Gandhi's humanism

Gandhi's supreme quality was his all-embracing humanism which did not recognize the usual categories of the high and the low, the rich and the poor or the religious or political labels which men and women wore, or the caste names under which they paraded themselves or suffered their fated ignominy. Gandhi had no faith except those who strove with him in the service of Truth; no favourites except those who laboured to banish injustice, exploitation and religious and racial fanaticism, and fought against them under the banner of *ahimsā*, no favourites except the weak, the downtrodden, the Harijans whom society had been treating as its accursed stepsons, who had neither self-respect, nor work of significance to do, nor even the basic minimum of one full meal a day. So, in a sense, the whole world was his favourite except the group of killers, exploiters, and clever manipulators in different fields of life who gambled with the happiness and welfare of individuals and groups for their own petty and mean purposes. But — and this is a significant but — while they are not his favourites like the men and women to whom life is more than political manipulation, more than economic aggression, more than the satisfaction of material wants, he was deeply concerned about them also and anxious to redeem their souls.

Gandhi sincerely believed that there was some spark of goodness, some hidden flash of the divine light in every human being however depraved. In his deep compassion he could see the tiny spark of

divinity even in the worst criminal. And he considered it his business to awaken it at any cost. In fact, one may almost say that he regarded this class of persons also as under-privileged — spiritually underprivileged. While the others had little or no privileges, these were twice unblessed — they had many kinds of privileges but they did not use them for the good of their fellow men and women. An unshared, selfish privilege is really a grindstone round a person's neck. They only fattened and in the process, morally killed their egos. Selfishness calcified them. Like Daniel Webster, the famous American lawyer, Gandhi was prepared to wrestle for their souls with the devil himself, and if he could do so successfully even for one misguided soul, he would regard it as a great moral victory. This is, if we may so, the essential difference between the way of the politician and the prophet, the power drunk maniac who has the presumption to remake the world in his own image, to treat it as an instrument of his unchaste will, and the patient, loving, heart-breakingly difficult way of the man of faith, who knows that he is not God but only a humble instrument of His will, who can fulfil his role only by trying to serve God's increasing purpose and not his own increasing thirst for power or wealth or worldly goods or his desire to impose some sort of uniformity on his fellow men, which is so dear to the heart of the bureaucrat, the technocrat and the computer. This is the essence of Gandhi's humanistic philosophy.

Let us remember that we who honour him, would do well to avoid the danger of importing literalism in interpreting his teachings — "the Master has spoken thus; we must, therefore, follow him to the letter" — forgetting that the letter often killeth; it is the spirit that keepeth alive. Gandhi himself would have advised us — did, in fact, do so — to assimilate the basic essentials of his thought, and not to be concerned too much with detailed particulars which are apt to change with time and circumstances. Unlike most of us, Gandhi was ever ready to confess his own errors — sometimes describing them as 'Himalayan blunders'. Gandhi laid no claim to infallibility, no claim to being a prophet. His greatest aspiration was to be a humble and sincere follower of Truth, which he identified with God. He reversed his earlier definition of God as Truth to Truth as God, on the plea that men sometimes disbelieve in God but no one dare disbelieve in Truth.



His crusade against Untouchability

Gandhi is known to be a servant and champion of the Harijans. His keenest efforts were directed towards their regeneration. Appreciating the fact that untouchability was a problem of inter-caste relations, he declared that caste had nothing to do with religion and *varna*.²¹ He also declared that there was nothing in religion or in the law of *varna* that warranted a belief in untouchability. He went to the extent of saying that "it is this travesty of *varna* that has degraded Hinduism and India since caste and untouchability had no place in religion, the former was a social evil while the latter was a soul destroying sin."²² A keen student of the *Gita* as he was, he urged the people to develop the quality of looking upon all as equal.²³ But this equality was not of function and position. By virtue of holding a superior position, one did not become superior to others, but had to shoulder a responsibility equal to his position.

Gandhi had a good understanding of social relations. Emphasising the importance of morality, he said: "It involves social relations and affects the society in the same way as by approving certain laws and customs the society is affected in one way or the other." Thus for the abolition of the caste system, Gandhi opened his attack against untouchability. Perhaps his belief was that once untouchability was destroyed and caste Hindus accepted the Harijans, the institution of caste itself would be weakened. Gandhi was indeed aiming at achieving fraternity between the peoples belonging to different races and religions. In his own words, "this realization of unity in diversity is implied in the removal of untouchability."²⁴

On the evil of conversion

Gandhi was of the view that so long as one believed in one's own religion and respected the religion of others, there would be cooperation and goodwill in society. But the moment one talks conversion, a barrier comes up immediately.²⁵ As a devout Hindu, the priceless lesson that he learnt was to desist from converting people to Hinduism, and to help everyone to become good specimens of their own faith. Gandhi was opposed to conversion without conviction, it being merely a change of convenience, while real conversion brought about a revolution in one's life.²⁶

If the swaraj of Gandhi's dream is to be made a reality, they have to be freed from the social disabilities from which they are suffering. If it is a fact that Harijans even after 34 years of freedom and self-rule, are struggling under certain social disabilities, then we have to properly understand the nature of the problem — whether untouchability is a social problem or an economic problem. Once the disease is diagnosed, treatment becomes easy. The problem has so far not been seen in the true perspective.

We would have honoured Gandhi best had we succeeded in removing untouchability, an objective he wanted to achieve even before attaining swaraj. Liquidation of untouchability was the foremost aspect of his constructive programme — the way for attaining swaraj.

If all the ideas and activities of Gandhi, as viewed above, were considered in isolation, they would constitute a hybrid mixture of fads, slogans and principles, many of which might have no relevance to our study of politics, economics, ethics, sociology or law. It is only when we preface our study by the fact of Gandhi's fundamental moral postulates that the significance of Gandhian thought becomes clear.

In this light, the basic principles integrated in his thought are:

1. the conception of truth as central to his life and work.
2. faith in God as the foundation of morality.
3. means are as important as ends.
4. his principle of spiritualization of politics.
5. his doctrine of individual worth *vs.* state authority.
6. his moral philosophy of the integration of body, mind and soul.
7. his integration of action with knowledge and knowledge with action.
8. his emphasis on correlation of rights and duties.
9. his championship of the right to equality.
10. his crusade against untouchability being based on ideals of social and political justice.

11. his belief in the supremacy of self-suffering and love.
12. his economic principles providing a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one.
13. his scientific outlook giving a new moral dimension.
14. his rediscovery of faith and action.
15. his visualization of a world order based on peace and non-violence.
16. his striving for the union of human souls.
17. his firm belief in man's educability and perfectibility.
18. his firm belief in love in action.
19. his zeal to cultivate the valour of the spirit.
20. his ultimate quest for perfection.

Lastly, we are led to the final problem regarding the possibility of the establishment of a non-violent social system or even world peace within the changing context of the existential bases of modern human society. World peace and non-violence are now not merely issues of religious morality but have become integral to the existential process and bases of the social structure of the modern society. The tendency towards a pragmatic and rational assessment of the problem has increased but the earlier tradition of an aesthetic and moral approach to the quest for non-violence has not completely been abandoned. This pluralism of approaches to the establishment of a non-violent society symbolises the versatility as well as the vigour of the emerging tradition of non-violence.

Gandhi's life was a shining example of 'simple living and high thinking.' He desired us to develop an integrated personality by prompting our physical, emotional, mental as well as ethical qualities.

This is a time of extraordinary crisis — population crisis, pollution crisis, political leadership crisis, hijacking crisis, brain-drain, energy crisis, only to mention a few. Never before has mankind faced such extreme alternatives. On the one hand, one fears total destruction, swiftly *via* nuclear bombs or more slowly *via* over-crowding and pollution; on the other, one sees a Golden Age of comfort, health,

beauty, moral and intellectual growth. The choices are not single nor simple; the paths are blurred and tangled. But choices and paths are discernible.

In short, although Gandhi's heritage has to be further amplified, refined, developed and up-dated, there is no denying the fact that his approach to human settlements may serve the same vital function in society as salt does in imparting flavour to food. Gandhi's views on human habitation are fundamentally radical. He is neither mediaeval nor reactionary. There is no question of rejecting scientific technology. But it involves changing the direction and needs of modern technology consistent with the capacity of man to remain in command of it.

Gandhi's thought must be evaluated on its merits and not always on his arguments, for his conduct is often more revealing than the arguments advanced by him for a particular course of action. In studying him, note must be taken not only of what he spoke or wrote but also of the totality of his life, the skill with which he faced and tackled trying situations, organized governments and ran institutions.

The purpose of this analysis is not to examine Gandhi's ideas in retrospect but in the perspective of the timeless values and verities for which he stood. We should approach Gandhi in a spirit of pure academic enquiry, and our purpose can be neither to bury him nor to praise him, but only to have an honest comprehension of his world-view (*weltanschauung*) vis-a-vis the multitudinous tendencies of modernization. If systematically considered and suitably interpreted, Gandhi's heritage as a whole offers valuable insights for the proper understanding of the ills of contemporary civilization and the formulation of an alternative model of human settlement.

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LECTURE TWO

PERSPECTIVES ON MAN: GANDHI'S VIEW

In the history of human thought and civilization, there are dual views about the nature of man described, which go under two distinct headings, *viz.*, the Secular and the Spiritual views. The impenitent scientist looks upon man as a complicated machine. Man stands, in the words of Julian Huxley, 'at the cross-roads of evolution.' Evolution at the human level is self-conscious and willed and is not automatic as at the biological level. The determinist section among biologists describe man as 'one that is naturally selected and is not supernaturally elected.' Though man is an evolute of nature, still he is able to overpower her ways and claims self-direction. Though he has simian ancestry, many of his distinguishing traits are not derived from the prior evolutes. In the words of Julian Huxley, "we are animals with a difference, that we are capable of reasoning and conceptual thought: creative imagination and communication by speech symbols." Some scientists do not accord him any special place. Copernicus and Gallileo have dethroned our globe from its position of importance in the universe.

Darwin dealt a severe blow at the spiritual concept of man by describing man as a product of evolution. Freud's discovery of the Unconscious and his description of its functions have given the go-bye to the cherished doctrine of man's freedom of will. He is a plaything of his Unconscious and the complexes. Marx has described man as determined by his conditions. The criticisms of Copernicus, Darwin, Freud and Marx aim at debunking and not mystifying the nature of man. To them, man is no more than any other object, with the difference that he is the most complicated object.

Some Evolutionists, Humanists and the secular minded thinkers have been trying to assert the unique nature of man. They affirm that

man is essentially free and is not completely determined. Man has foresight, insight and hind-sight (i.e. imagination, intuition and memory). The English poet, Shelley described man as "one who looks before and after and pines for what is not."

Man cherishes ideals which are not as yet actualised, and seeks to bring them into existence and incorporate them into society. Three qualities in man stand out prominently. They are: his capacity for knowledge, his sense of responsible freedom and his aspiration for values. Among the modern philosophies, it is only existentialism which has dared to accept the absurdity of existence and yet affirm a heroic responsibility for man — the creation of his essence through the free choice of values.

Man is an integral whole as the carrier of values of complex dimensions. Man's values, his group structure constitute a single arch supporting the ascending, aspiring, activating moral spirè of nobility, goodness, justice and love that gently touches the sublime heights of infinite and the perfect.

Human life is multi-dimensional. It is left for man alone to perceive and impose upon himself the boundaries within which he opts to live. From one dimension to another, there is an inter-relation and inter-dependence of norms. In course of time, with the expansion of knowledge, certain norms come to be recognised as generic, universally valid, serving as directives to man's development in all spheres of human activity. Man's ultimate progress rests on his faith in values, linked with knowledge and on the inter-penetration of values. Philosophy always governs as it reflects on the meanings of social concepts, attitudes and values. Values live in two realms — in the work-a-day world of human activities and in Plato's sphere of abstract forms. Man in short, is the valuational-symbolic rather than the mere rational animal. Knowledge is the prime source of all values and values find their significance in a constellation rather than in isolation. Philosophical reflection should lead man to the awareness of his deepest valuational potentialities, which would then have to be canalised, harmonised, embodied and given a realistic shape by the process of spiritual disciplines as understood in the Hindu texts.

Hindu Philosophy seeks to understand what man is, what one *can* and *ought* to become in this world, how one can become it, and what

the nature of the world is in which one has one's being. These questions and answers, and their social implications determine the nature of the Hindu tradition of thought which human life has generated in its annals of self-reflection.

Man is capable of achieving these ideals only through action (*kriyā*). Spirituality is the core of Hindu religion. "A spiritual view," says Radhakrishnan, "is sustained not by insight but also by a rational philosophy and sound social institutions."¹ The uniqueness of Hindu thought, is the recognition and explication of the inwardness of man, of its freedom, sacredness, nobility and importance. In spite of rapid changes frequented by scientific and technological progress, man should not be lost in them by losing his inwardness and its freedom; and this inwardness should not disenable him from reacting suitably the ever-changing pattern of life and complexion of outward existence.

It may be asked, what is the nature of man? The reply obviously is that man is essentially the 'soul' or 'spirit.' It is eternal, immortal and is essentially of the nature of knowledge, consciousness and bliss. It is absolutely pure. It may be noted that every sentient being is a soul. But man alone has the prerogative of making spiritual progress, because he has the eligibility for action (*karma*) and knowledge (*jñāna*). We may note in this connection, an illuminating passage from Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* which is as follows:

"When every form without any distinction is a modification of matter and lineal descent of Brahman, why should man alone be singled out here? The reason is that he is the Principal. Why is he the Principal? Because he has eligibility for action and knowledge."²

This passage means that all forms of life and existence, that we come across in the world are, in a sense, modifications of matter (*anna*); without matter no life is possible, no manifestation is possible. The highest truth that in the absolute Brahman all things are comprised, that Brahman is free from characteristics (*nirguṇa*) and free from any distinctions (*nirviśeṣa*), can best be understood only by man who is endowed with the power to reflect upon the nature of himself and also of the world of objects. It is this reflection that makes for spiritual advancement, and it is this characteristic of his that distinguishes him

from animals. Śaṅkara defines this characteristic as the eligibility for willed action (*karma*), and knowledge (*jñāna*), and cites in this connection a scriptural text which says: "The Atman is expanded only in man. He, indeed, is most endowed with intelligence. He gives expression to what is known. He sees what is known. He knows what is to come. He knows the visible and the invisible worlds. He perceives the immortality through the mortal. Thus is He endowed. But with other animals, eating and drinking alone constitute their knowledge."³ Śaṅkara holds that birth as a human being is precious because of this fundamental characteristic.⁴

The following verse from the *Mahābhārata* also tells us that, there is nothing higher than man on earth: "I tell you this, the secret of Brahman: there is nothing higher than man."⁵

In the ultimate analysis, man is the epitome of the Absolute. God forms the substratum of the panorama of the phenomenal world. The *Iśā Upaniṣad* says: "The entire universe is pervaded by the Absolute."⁶ The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* also states: "Everything of the universe is Brahman, the individual soul is identical with Brahman."⁷

Man's being has two dimensions, the inward and the outward. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says that the Lord created the senses as outward looking (*parāṅci*), and so man perceives with the senses only external objects; but one who aims at self-realization with the senses turned inward looks at the inner spirit.

All activities of man, whether religious or social, political or economic, ethical or aesthetic, prayer or practice of *yoga* — all these can be viewed as spiritual activity, provided its inward significance is recognized. At this stage, the question may be raised as to what is meant by spiritual life according to Indian thought? We are not concerned here about the life of the Ātman, spirit itself, or of the soul when dissociated from the body. We are concerned with the spiritual life of human beings, the kind of life extolled by all religions, the life bent upon the realization of its spiritual essence. Only in the context of answering this question can we get a significant meaning of the term 'spiritual.' The answer is: spiritual life is life directed towards the realization of Ātman. Spiritual activity is activity directed towards the same end.

A deeper reading into man's spiritual quest reveals that spirituality is to be regarded not as one segment of experience, but as the synthesis of all experiences and as the plenitude of all existence. Spiritual experience is the triumphant glory and final consummation of man's existence on earth. It is the emphasis on spiritual freedom as the *summum bonum* that makes the message of Indian culture supremely significant to the modern man who is afflicted with the malady of excessive outwardness. One need not go elsewhere in the quest of perfection or happiness; it is within us and can be discovered if one turns inwardly towards oneself. "Higher than the Self there is nothing whatever," declares the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. "That is the end. That is the final goal."⁸

The call of the age is to rise into a higher consciousness from which alone man can learn to look upon and use material objects not as material in themselves but as things instinct with the spirit. The starting point of Indian thought is its emphasis on man himself. If we take the utterances of the important philosophers of each tradition into consideration, 'Man, know thyself,' may be said to be the chief advice of all the four traditions. The *Upaniṣads* did the same when they exhorted man: *ātmanāṇi viddhi* (know thyself). Confucious also gave the same advice. He said that in order to organize one's state well, one had ultimately to study the nature of things. But 'things' meant for the Chinese philosophers, human relationships originating out of nature of man. One thing is certainly clear: that the values of life are not mere delusions of the human mind, but are real spiritual forces, however dimly envisaged. It is to be admitted that the truths are truths for man and that values are values for man. Man becomes the common denominator of all truths and values and therefore of all philosophies. Thus there is emphasis on the spirit in man. If man, according to the Upaniṣadic theory of *pañcakōśa*, is an integrated whole of matter (*annamayakōśa*), life (*prāṇamayakōśa*), mind (*manomayakōśa*), intellect (*vijñānamayakōśa*) and spirit (*ānandamayakōśa*), and if body depends on life, life on mind, mind on intellect, and intellect on spirit for growth, regulation, and development, then the emphasis on spiritual development by Indian thinkers is justified.

In the preceding paragraphs, we have analysed the nature of man as a spiritual being. This study is relevant for our understanding of man as a social being. Man is the "measure of all things." Man has to

live in society before he could live spiritually. He is gregarious: selfish and yet a rational and moral animal. Self-development is possible only through his active social participation, which implies the observance of ethical codes of life.

Ethical man is in everything the opposite of the precipitate and apathetic man. He is the seer of values, he is sapiens in the original sense of the word; the 'taster.' He it is who has a faculty for the fullness of life's values, that moral faculty of which Franz Hemsterhuis prophesized, 'to it gleaming riches open.'

In fact evaluation is the prerogative of man. It is just possible that other creatures also seek ends. But it is given to man alone to judge the worth of ends as well as means, and choose from among them. Finally, it is man alone who quests after the eternal and eventually succeeds in gaining it.

Though man is basically good, evil forces somehow shroud his good qualities and force him to do wrong actions in life. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* declares: "Both the good and the pleasing come to man. One who is wise considers the two all round and discriminates them. He chooses the good in preference to the pleasing. One who is stupid chooses the pleasing for the sake of acquisition and prosperity.""

It is true that there is repulsion enough in nature. However, man can overcome this conflict because he possesses good qualities, viz., reasoning power and the altruistic principle of self-sacrifice which are essential to enable him to lead a good life. 'To live and let live' is the golden maxim which he should adopt. While as a spirit he is good, as a brute he is nothing. Man's true destiny is not the conquest of external nature but the conquest of his own self because *ātma-nigraha* or the suppression of the lower self alone indicates the supremacy of the human spirit.

Man has to strike a golden mean between two extremes, viz., selfish individualism, and effacement of the individual by external control. In life, there is a dual-spell both regression and progression. All the attempts aimed at man's freedom from external and internal entanglements can therefore be said to be moved by the progressive urge.

It is a truism to say that no man lives unto himself alone. A thoughtless, heartless, selfishness is a veritable perversity of souls. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life.

Man is free and creative and endeavours to make the universe look beautiful and loveable. As man acts, so shall he be. Man disciplines himself by ethical training. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates exhorts 'man to become like God as far as he is able to'. For Immanuel Kant, "the contemplation of the starry heaven above should be accompanied by the recognition of the moral law within us." The main concern of Hindu thought is with the status of man. Kant's nature as a social being and his innate desire to live meaningfully as a human being endowed with a spark of reason and a glimpse of the Moral Imperative enables us to understand his deeper nature.¹⁰ Gandhi's conception of man becomes significant against the backdrop of the spiritual view of man that we have so far traced.

A votary of the creative role of spiritual ideas, Gandhi singled out moral force as infinitely superior to physical force. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. The spirit dominates matter totally and completely in his philosophy of self-culture.

The fundamental belief which underlies the Gandhian view of man is that there is a spiritual principle — 'an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything', and that 'human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality.'¹²

Gandhi holds that the essential nature of man is good and non-violent but life on earth and embodied existence makes him a complex substance, the combination of spirit and matter, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, the ape and the essence, dust and divinity, light and darkness.

According to Gandhi, man has two diametrically opposite aspects, viz., (1) the spiritual, rational and the ethical aspect and (2) the instinctive, appetitive and the impulsive aspect. Divine spark is ingrained in the spiritual aspect of human personality, and the brutish tendencies are germane in his instinctive aspect. The rational, moral and loving behaviour are the expressions of the spiritual nature of our

individual. While on the other hand, the gross, irrational and pugnacious behaviour are the expressions of his brutish tendencies.

The spirit takes existence on earth and manifests itself in the form of Man. Human life is the result of one's Karma and man takes several births to work out his Karma. *Samsāra*, life on earth, is 'a succession of spiritual opportunities'. The purpose and the function of *Prakṛti* (matter) is to enable man to work out his destiny. It is the indispensable instrument the Lord has given us. Paradoxical as it may appear, *Prakṛti* binds man and also helps to liberate him. We should remember that *Prakṛti* (matter) is an instrument and it should never be treated as an end in itself, but must be so used as to help the liberation of man. Gandhi does not want us to mortify our physical and biological nature, but use restraint and harness it to the process of self-realization. He holds the view that we must use all our God-given resources, physical strength, intellectual knowledge, moral probity for the realization of the self and not regard them as ends in themselves. The way in which matter or *Prakṛti* must be made to aid self-development is outlined in the *Karma-Yoga* of the *Gītā* and in the constructive programme of Gandhi. "Man" says the Mahatma, "has two windows to his mind. Through the one he can see his own self as it is, through the other he can see what he ought to be."

This power which Gandhi exercised entirely and always for the welfare of the people can be described, only as moral power, power of character, power of truth, power of selfless service and sacrifice, power of the purity of the soul and of motives, power of the goodness of means he employed. Gandhi called it soul-force or the power of Truth.

Gandhi's speeches and writings bear ample evidence of this power. It was this which made the British philosopher C. E. M. Joad declare that Gandhi was a 'Moral Genius,' 'the conscience of humanity.'

At the present stage of evolution, man is increasingly becoming conscious of his own consciousness and is capable of being witness to what is going on in his own mind. He has also developed what is called 'Conscience,' a kind of discriminating judgment (*Sadasadviveka-buddhi*), which gives him a sense of values and points out what is good for his progress. Man may be said to have come of age and can

be held responsible for his evolution which is on in nature. No doubt, this conscience is at present aptly called 'the still small voice,' as Gandhi describes it. He calls it thus because man has not yet developed the power of will to abide by the dictates of his own conscience. Even so, we do recognise the existence of a conscience in man in spite of the fact that confirmed materialists look upon it as an interloper since they have no use for moral values.

Gandhi respected reason in man as a specific quality, but did not make it an end in itself. Reason at best is a slave of passions. It cannot prescribe ends but is only an instrument. Its deliverances are inconclusive. He wrote: "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 stones 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."

Gandhi never believed that moral life is the spontaneous expression of all our natural impulses. He was always aware of the dual element in human nature. Gandhi never agreed with the view that man is a fallen creature and is tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity and could only be rescued by the Grace of God, consequent on man's acceptance of Him as his only redeemer.

Gandhi did not agree with the view that the essential nature of man is pure, that the bad in him is an *ad hoc* adventitious factor that is bound to drop away. Gandhi took a position in between the two and regarded man as a complex of two natures, dark and bright. Man needs special moral effort to live down the lower nature by transmuting it into the service of the higher by his ethical excellence and devotion to God. So Gandhi, pleads that one should earn his livelihood by the sweat of his brow, in a just way and enjoy his desires without contravening the principles of *dharma*.

Man does not grow alone but has to live amidst others in society. Gandhi held that self-development is possible only through social participation. The real nature of man which is non-violent has to be sustained by society. Man's ideals would have remained abstract concepts but for society. He knew the evils of defiant individualism

and the resultant anxiety it will usher in. He wrote: "Unrestricted individualism is the Law of the beast of the jungle..willing submission to social restraints for the sake of the well-being of whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member." What strikes one in the writings of Gandhi is his unconquerable faith in man and in the power of love and truth as the means to build a sane society, naturally productive, aesthetically, beautifully and socially just.

The Cosmic Order, the *Rta* of the *Vedas* is there, but man has to attune himself to the *rhythm*, so that while the individual strives to redeem the world, he redeems himself too. They are inseparable.

Marx on Man

Marx and Gandhi differ widely from each other, so far as the status of the individual was concerned. They differ because they considered the question from different and opposite view-points of materialism and spiritualism respectively.

Man, according to Marx, is the totality of his social connections, hence emancipated society is identical with the emancipated self. This self is called by Marx as 'man's communist essence' (*das Kommunistische Wesen des Menschen*) or 'Socialized man' (*der sozialistische Mensch*).¹ Here, Marx's logic, anthropology and political sociology meet. For Marx, 'das Kommunistische Wesen' is both a criterion for measuring existing political institutions and a paradigm of future society.

Marx deduces man's social, political and trans-subjective nature from his quality as an object-creating being. Man's relation to members of his species is not only the means of his existence but its contents as well. Man's objective being and his other-directedness and sociability serve therefore as criteria for the evaluation of economic theories and social structures. The origins of his idea can be traced to the *Critique of 1843* where Marx posits 'man's communist being, against individualism that ultimately reduces man to self-defeating hedonism.

Marx was convinced that without any economic freedom all other struggles to make man free will be useless. Man may not live a successful socio-political life in a bad social set-up; but his chance

of survival will be impossible if he is not offered the requisite economic freedom and liberty. To attain economic prosperity, man must depend on himself.

Marx speaks of the universal character of the individual man. When man participates in the political process as a citizen of the state, he participates in 'Universality.' But the contradiction arises. As a participant in the life of daily work in society, man is a prisoner of his limited particularity, he does not relate his work to the life of the community. Formal democracy leaves the working and living conditions of the common man untouched. Therefore the freedom of the political order must be extended to his concrete life. Otherwise there would be alienation due to the lack of the free play of man's universal nature as a man. Marx thought that alienation, from this angle, can be eliminated by the abolition of the system of private ownership of the means of production and exploitation on which it rests. Marx's analysis of alienation brings out the element of conflict between the 'universal' and the 'particular' from the abstract angle, and, concretely, that between the society and the state, as reflected in his serfdom of the worker contrasted with the shadowy freedom of the citizen as a voter in a democratic state. It is thus clear that alienation according to Marx has to be traced to the fragmented man in place to the 'total' man. This is a critique of industrial civilization which draws Marx close to Gandhi.

Marx glorified labour; so did Gandhi. If work is the principal expression of man's humanity, work under inhuman or subhuman conditions means alienation or dehumanisation. According to Marx, man is alienated from his labour which has an ulterior object *viz.*, how to maximise the 'surplus.'

Marx holds that there is alienation of man from labour in the sense that man is becoming independent of labour in affluent societies. Freedom from labour seems to be purchased at too high a price. Man is maladjusted, schizophrenic, and unhappy.

In the present state of the world, man is alienated from his true self, which is free, creative, communal spirit. He is dominated from without and exploited as though he was a thing. Man is artificially

sundered from his fellows in individualist society.' This is particularly seen in his economic relationships which are produced by a system of private property involving the division of labour. In revulsion against the state of things, Marx does not appeal to the determinisms of the dialectic for release, but rather to the categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions in which man is abased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being.

Marx holds that consciousness is nothing but a reflection of the material environmental condition of man's existence. Marx never fully denies the validity of traditional mechanistic modes of consciousness as expression of alienated life in existing society. These imperfect modes of consciousness will exist as long as bourgeois society continue to exist.

The identification of human consciousness with the practical process of reality is shaped by man in Marx's epistemological and historical achievement. To Marx, reality is always human reality not in the sense that man exists within nature, but in the sense that shapes nature. This act also shapes man and his relation to other human beings; it is a total process, implying a constant interaction between a subject and object.

The texture of social relations is conceived by Marx as the quintessence of human activity, which, in recognising its world, continually creates and changes it. Consequently, the critique of social relations is the most specific human critique, and any discussion of man must deal with his activity for 'man is not an abstract being, squatting outside the world. Man is the human world, the state and society.'

Marx conceives history as the continuum of modes of work over generations. The pre-eminence in Marx's discussion of economic activity does not derive from the pre-eminence of material economic values, but from Marx's view of man as '*homo faber*.' The condition in which labour manifests itself provide the key to the understanding of human history and its ultimate and immanent vindication.

Marx perceives that the conditions under which man's self-creation takes place in present society are self-defeating. Labour is supposed to be man's process of self-becoming because it is man's specific attribute.

In the present day society, it does not develop man but emasculates him. Instead of adding dimensions of creativity to man and widening his human activity, the process of labour in present day society degrades man into a commodity and the product of his labour, by nature the phenomenal realization of man's active consciousness impressing itself on the external world, becomes man's master.

From the analysis of Marx's view of alienation emerges the possibility of a radical revolution in man's conditions that will enable him to achieve the full potential of his self-creativity. Man as creator of himself and of his world also provides a criterion for the analysis of the conditions of his contemporary historical existence.

Marx generated a new illusion: the illusion of the superiority of the social revolutionary consciousness. Marx tried to direct the human being of any spiritual soul and intuitional consciousness. Marx enshrined a new fetishism of the proletariat.

Gandhi's humanism, has a distinct leaning towards spiritualism. He did not like to make any compromise with the view that man is the product of matter and consequently he was governed by natural laws only. Marx's humanism, on the contrary, was the doctrine of 'the self-sufficiency of man in nature,' designed to counteract doctrines which support religion and God.

For Gandhi, the centrality of man permeated the entire canvas leading from ontology to human concern with the most ordinary needs or of the deepest intellectual and spiritual striving. At the centre of Marxism lies human labour as a productive unit.

Man and his social destiny

Man is placed today in an ambiguous position: he is both part of society and alienated from it. An amazing facet of the human life episode is man's capacity to formulate and reformulate ideas and ideals that have given significant purpose to his life, established the path of human understanding and fellowship, co-ordinated social life and sanctioned authority.

Man since the dawn of civilization has built his culture not merely by his intellectual tools and toils of labour, but also largely by his

dauntless desire to transcend them. This innate urge was fulfilled in his building a world of values which he cherished. Tradition thus enables a man to be what he is in relation to others in society. An individual unquestionably grows largely in and through society. Man exists in and through society, to which he owes life.

Man is a unique creature in the evolutionary life-process and society is a distinctive achievement. His consciousness creates a sense of individuality and a desire for personal freedom and happiness. He desires to be free but at the same time he is conscious of the fact that in the general interests of an ordered social life, must submit himself to some authority. Social life creates in him a sense of justice. As man discovered the laws of nature (*lex naturale*), his belief in reason released man from his meek submission to authority and finally led him to his assertion of himself as an individual.

Man — the Individual and Nature

By individual is meant a human being who is not merely a speck of Nature, accepting unquestioningly what Nature offers and submitting blindly to its powerful forces, but one who often resists it and initiates new actions, one, in other words who is as such above Nature as in it. The entire spirit of Indian thought and structure, which we have analysed earlier, originating from the *Vedas* has accorded due significance to individual as individuals.

Man and Society

Human life is ever-changing. It is not static but dynamic. As life changes, changes occur in society too. Society is a dynamic process. Man is an integral whole as the carrier of values of complex dimensions the ascending, aspiring. Man's values, his group structure constitute a single arch supporting, activating moral spire of nobility, goodness, justice and love that gently touches the sublime heights of Infinite and the perfect. What is to be achieved is that the individual as an integrated person may have to realize to the fullest extent his own innate possibilities as a human being in and through society.

The Objectivity of Values in relation to Man and Society

Man's complete living and self-realisation depend on the purposeful pursuit of the intrinsic values of life. T.H. Green aptly remarks that no values are supreme in life than those of the human personality.

He observes: "Values are always for, of, or in a person, in persons as such. Our ultimate standard of wealth is an ideal of personal worth." Gandhi agrees with Immanuel Kant that man is never to be regarded as a means to an end but always as an end in himself (*Selbstzweck*).

By this we raise a social demand for value. Such a demand embraces a value-progression and appears in the form of an insight into the idea of man as such. Values, ideals and norms give true meaning and moral direction to the self or person as a social being and also to social groups and institutions. Society experiences, analyses and validates values, and in the process is also significantly modified and altered by values. It is this dual functional relationship of values, ideals and norms to man, his life and society that makes social life significant.

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LECTURE III

Section A

CHRIST AND GANDHI

Lord Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi are two of the world's greatest spiritual leaders, and it is of the utmost importance that they should be compared in every possible detail so that through such comparisons, Christians and Hindus may understand better each other's, and their own heritage. Christ represents the Christian tradition while Gandhi represents the Hindu tradition essentially.

From the standpoint of both modern theology and the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church, it is undeniable that the truth of the Gospel is itself the living person of Jesus Christ; suffering, dying and redeeming, raised to lordship by the Father. The truth as stated by Christianity is the truth of a living person. The gospel proclaims that God's truth has become incarnate and redemptive, has been revealed in the person and life of Jesus. In short, Christian truth is Jesus Christ, the incarnate truth of Jesus remains present in the mystical identity between Christ and the faithful followers. As Karl Barth has put it, "If Jesus Christ is the word of Truth, then the truth of God is exactly this and nothing else."¹

For orthodox Protestantism, God has revealed himself, once for all in Jesus Christ. The mystic, in trying to rise above the world in order to achieve the vision of God, wilfully hurries past God, as Karl Barth puts it, God "who descends in His revelation unto this world of ours."² The True Christian can be 'perfected' only in the sense, that through his faith in Christ, Christ's merits are imputed to him. But this imputation does not free him from sin.

Jesus is God-incarnate, a perfected being. The perfection of man according to Saint Aquinas, lies in the vision of God — or, more precisely,

of the Divine Essence.³ Aquinas argues further that men can achieve that end only by the grace of God, not by the mere exercise of talents and skills. The vision of God is at once man's natural end and a supernatural gift. Human perfection is taken to consist in imitating the example set by that perfection — exemplary perfection. For the Stoics, Socrates served as such an idea; Christians have naturally turned to Jesus, considered as a human figure. "To be a man," Sartre has written, "means to reach towards being God."⁴ This is possible only through mystical realisation of God.

Extensive researches carried by Professors Underhill and George Godwin show that the mystics, the world over, have followed the same way, viz.: first, awakening God-awareness; secondly ridding the mind of temptations, values and influences, attachment, fear and wrath; thirdly, illumination of the self; fourthly, surrendering the self to God; fifthly union with God; and finally liberation from the control of the finite things. This mystic way is common to all mystics throughout the ages, whether they professed Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism or Judaism. The *Gītā* aptly describes such mystics thus: "They are asleep in the world of senses in which ordinary men are awake; they are awake in the world of the spirit in which ordinary men are asleep."⁵

The entire universe comprehending man within it glows with the radiance (*tejas*) of God. The realization of this great truth of universal pervasion of the deity dawns only in the lives of spiritual seekers whose illumination and influence make it an impression on those in the midst of whom they live. A mystic may be described as "one who sees God in all and all in God." He thus becomes an instrument of God with a complete mastery of the unconscious and conscious forces of his human person. The mystic will feel and act in the conviction that he is under the rule of a law which is God's law, the law which "doth preserve the stars from wrong." He thus takes his cue from a God willing to take upon Himself the burdens of all the actions he casts on Him in complete self-surrender (*sarāṅgati*). If we may call this many faceted 'yoga', mysticism, the *yogin* will be a mystic. The experience of a saintly person or a mystic is *ānanda* (pure unalloyed bliss). It is the realization of being one with the universe and the creator. It is the joy of affirmation, of life and being, joy of the universe; this supreme bliss is

the vital spark which illumines and guides the life of a saintly person. For him there is joy in being, in living, in serving.

*"Ānandaṁ brahmaṇo vidvān,
na bibhēti kadācaneti."*

The whole world is replete with joy for him and he is fearless and peerless because his self is *ātma ānandamayāḥ*. The greatness of a Buddha or a Mohammad or a Jesus or a Gandhi was due to the essential spirituality or innate religiousness which pervaded their whole life and action.⁶ Truly, Christ and Gandhi were great prophets and mystics. While Christ was the apostle of love, Gandhi — the saint made action the touchstone of truth and non-violence. It is true that Gandhi also concretized love throughout his life. He harnessed love in much the same way as Christ did. In fact Gandhi moulded truth, love and non-violence into the subsistence of heroic action which created socio-political and economic revolutions of national dimensions.

The greatest-men of the world have been exemplars of the gospel of spiritual freedom. In the spiritual history of man, Jesus Christ is really a stupendous fact and everyone ought to face up to him. So was the case with other spiritual leaders like the Buddha, Socrates, Laotze, Sri Ramakrishna and Gandhi. All these spiritual leaders have emphasized the need for spiritual reorientation of our outlook in life. It is to be aware of and live in it that the call has repeatedly come to him from the saviours of the race. Indeed Jesus Christ's "The kingdom of God is within you," the Buddha's "Be a lamp unto yourself," Sri Krishna's "Seek refuge in the Lord seated in the heart," the declaration of the *r̥ṣis* in the *Upaniṣad*, "Thou art that — *tattvamasi*" are verily the same gospel in the teachings of all god-men and seers of the world.

Schopenhauer regarded the Buddha and Christ as the ideal men of history because they had renounced home life and taught abnegation. Oswald Spangler, on the other hand, regarded fact and power as more significant elements in history than contemplation and truth. But Gandhi, as one of the epoch-making figures in India, combined both moral idealism and political success. The entire life of Gandhi was an experiment with truth and the experiment ultimately proved the victory of truth over untruth. His is a unique figure because of the simple and straightforward views which he preached and practised

without swerving from truth at every moment during his long career as a social reformer, a political leader, a saint, a true lover of humanity and an apostle of non-violence, truth, love, goodness and peace.

Eminent leaders of man fall into two categories; to the first category, belong all those who affect the life and thought of their contemporaries in varying degrees, but whose influence steadily fades away after their death. To the second, belong those few who combine to influence humanity through their life and message long after their death. The latter phenomenon bespeaks a type of greatness capable of defying time itself which dissolves everything else in its relentless flow. Such greatness discloses something universal and abiding in the midst of much that is narrow and fleeting in the ideas and values radiated by the leader by his life and message. Christ and Gandhi belong to this second category.⁷

Against this spiritual backdrop which is a common heritage for both the Christians and the Hindus, let us now try to analyse the teachings of Christ and Gandhi in an objective manner.

To understand correctly how Gandhi's mind was moulded one has to go back to his childhood and see what ideas and impressions influenced him most. Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar in a coastal city north-west of Bombay, in a Hindu family belonging to the Bania division of the third ranking vaiśyas. Being born in a coastal city within the sound of sea, a certain mysticism had perhaps entered Gandhi's composition — a mysticism which, in later life, linked with a vivid practical sense to make the most formidable of all combinations. As a boy he admired the 'practicality of his father,' but he loved his mother Putli Bai and was greatly influenced by her 'saintliness' and her 'deeply religious' nature which later helped him to possess an unquenchable faith in God and made his life a lesson for all ages to come.

Vaishnavism, the family religion, was the earliest influence on Gandhi during his boyhood days. The *Vaiṣṇava* doctrine of *ahimsā* and love can therefore, be regarded as the basis of his philosophy of *ahimsā*. As he grew up, other influences clarified his faith and confirmed him in his deeprooted conviction. In his boyhood he read a play, *Śravaṇapitr-bhakti-nāṭaka*. He also saw it enacted. The play,

created an everlasting impression on his mind. 'Here is an example for you to copy', he said to himself. He also saw the play 'Harichandra'. This play set him on a career of seeking truth. Reciting the *Bhagavad Gītā*, reading aloud verses from the great *Rāmāyaṇa* and constant reciting of the hymn by saint poet Narasimha Mehta, '*Vaiṣṇava Janato Tenekahiye* (he is the true vaishnava, etc.) led Gandhi to believe that morality was the basis of things and truth was the substance of morality. Gandhi did not believe in narrow sectarianism. In fact, his implicit faith in truth as God had deeper roots in his life than his belief in any sect. Influenced to some extent by Jaina Thought, Gandhi singled out *ahimsā* as the fundamental moral virtue which ought to be practised at all times by all men. Significant for the development of Gandhi's premises was his reading of the book, Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, a romanised version of sayings attributed to the Buddha. Gandhi propounds the ethical religion and his views are similar with those of the Buddha, who taught that ethical life alone helps us to gain salvation. Gandhi characterised the Buddha as "a Hindu of Hindus who was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism."⁸ As a student in England, Gandhi read the chapter 'The Hero as a prophet.' He also read Slate's translation of the *Koran* in the early years of his stay in South Africa. "My reading of the *Koran* has convinced me that the basis of Islam is not violence."⁹ According to Gandhi, the chief contribution of Islam has been the brotherhood of man.

It is undeniable fact that Gandhi, while he was away from India imbibed a variety of religious ideas and principles drawn from many sources, but his readings from the Tulasidāsa's *Ramacaritamānasa* was the soil in which these new ideas were shown; and his discovery of the *Gītā* happened to coincide with a reading of Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* which directed his attention to his native faith and "disabused him of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstitions."

Gandhi's wide religious reading persuaded him to believe that all religions were true. He absorbed the ethical philosophy of the *Sermon on the Mount* and the transcendent monotheism of Islam into his own Hindu life, and through himself he transmitted it to the whole of India and to the world at large. In short, Gandhi, being enriched

with what he found best in the teachings of Jesus and Tolstoy, and the *Koran*, returned it to the people, changed but the eternal *dharma* intact.

Gandhi lived by the spirit, not the letter — for 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.' He was a man of God and lived an intensely religious inner life, from which his outward activities derived their strength and meaning. It was in religion that he found his true meaning. He wrote: "There is no such thing as religion overriding morality."¹⁰ In fact, he spiritualised politics by his firm religious convictions which were universal in nature. "By religion," Gandhi means, "not formal religion or customary religion but that religion which brings us face to face with our maker." He further says, "Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions."

This religion transcends Hinduism, Christianity, etc., and gives him reality. In short, Gandhi advocated *Sarvadharmasamabhāva*, i.e., reverence for all religions. This attitude alone will enable one to have a glimpse of the universal and absolute truth which is beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths.'

The whole of this background regarding Gandhi has to be borne in mind when we consider his views, his thoughts, and his action in life, with special reference to the teachings of Jesus Christ, which we shall examine presently.

Mahatma Gandhi was no Christian and the Christians were perplexed that this should be so, for never in modern times had they seen a man tread more faithfully in the footsteps of Christ. The fact of Gandhi, observes Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, is a challenge to the exclusive claims of Christianity.

Gandhi's attitude to Christianity is difficult to judge. Louies Fischer observes that 'Gandhi embraced Christ but rejected Christianity.'¹¹ For Jesus he had abundant reverence. "But many aspects of Christianity," Gandhi once wrote, "is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. Paul was not a Jew. He was a Greek, had an oratorical mind and he distorted Jesus. Christ possessed a great force — the Love force. Christianity became disfigured when it came to the west. It became the religion of kings."¹² Nevertheless, Gandhi saw the positive side of the

Christian faith in England and renewed his study of the Bible. "Jesus played a great part in my life." Gandhi said many years later, "unconsciously how much: I do not know; consciously how much: I do know. When I began to read the *Sermon on the Mount*, I felt the beauty of it. I cannot say that it is singular, or that it is not to be found in other religions. But the presentation is unique. So many of my words are chosen from the Bible; I am unable to speak without reference to it."¹³ Gandhi wrote: "Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal."¹⁴

Dr. Stanley Jones says of Gandhi: "One of the most Christ-like men in history was not called a Christian at all." If what is important in Christianity is the message of the Master and its application to life then Gandhi is really the true follower of Jesus. The story in the Bible, may be recalled here. It is stated how the disciples of Christ once came across a person doing good works in his name, who yet would not follow them; and they '*forbade him because he followed not us.*' When this incident was brought to the notice of Jesus, the Master said: "Forbid him not; for he that is not against you is for you."¹⁵ Gandhi certainly is not only not against Jesus, but essentially for him.

Gandhi was once questioned by a Christian missionary thus: "Christianity is experience of the living Christ and if he had not that experience, he is no Christian, however faithful he may follow the teachings of the Lord." To that Gandhi replied in memorable words "Do not fear any earthly power."

It is frequently alleged that Gandhi derived his view on *ahimsā* from the Jaina monks he had known in his youth, or from the *Sermon on the Mount*, or from Tolstoy. None of this seems necessary for the doctrine is prominent in the *Gītā* which he knew intimately and it permeates and suffuses all later Hindu thought.

The Bible declares that he who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword. It is one of the tragedies of history that the greatest exponents of non-violence, the most powerful opponents of the cult of the sword have died as a result of the sword succeeding over the principle of *ahimsā*. Christ died on the Cross. Gandhi was assassinated

and the latest instance is the death of Martin Luther King. Is non-violence then an empty dream? No. The crucifixion of Christ resulted in a great religion coming to birth which has moulded the thought and ideas of billions of people. The death of Gandhi has brought into existence a philosophy which is not only the basis of statecraft in our country but has influenced people all over the world.

It is true that we believe in an era of violence. The globe is wreathed in violent death. Truth suffers; hate triumphs; love is a waif. Is Gandhi to become the last Mahatma? Are the prophet Jesus' principles to be bartered for illusory benefits? Gandhi said: 'In the midst of darkness, light persists! We have faith in God. God in the form of Gandhi and Christ. More than their words their lives were their messages. The Lord, in the *Gita*, declares: "Bring me thy failure." Judged by the death of the Cross, Christ's mission was a failure but it has changed history. Similarly Gandhi failed in his mission to bring about Hindu-Muslim Unity. Who knows that his failure in the mission might pave the way for better relations with our neighbour. "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

The light of truth manifests in holy living. Christ and Gandhi have been the greatest exemplars of this truth. Gandhi's and Christ's faith in brotherhood is not a transcendental absolute but a call to make it immanent in the alphabets of human conduct. Ethical values have relevance to social facts. Peace is not the absence of conflict but it is the ability to cope with it. *Satyāgraha* is based on love, not on hate; on loving one's opponents and suffering, to convert them to the right path. It has the supreme virtue of proving means consonant with the highest ideals. The cross indicates that love which suffers is more powerful than the force which inflicts suffering.

Like Christ, Gandhi saw to the heart of things personal and national. One does realize that where there is true saintliness, there are no barriers of denominational differences. "Lord, increase our Faith"—that is what one feels when one thinks of Gandhi and the power of Jesus, or Allah or Rāma is there to help us.

Just as Christ the gentle-minded ruled over the waves of the sea, so did Gandhi over the sea of four hundred million human beings. Thinking of Gandhi we feel strengthened in the faith that man is able to

subdue his satanic impulses, a life lived as an example is more apt in changing mankind than all the systems of philosophy whether Eastern or Western or all the dogmas of religion.

For us there remains the example of a Gandhi, a Christ, who are the embodiments of purity, goodness, simplicity, and love, and who dedicated their lives for the cause of the sick, the poor and the down-trodden. God created man in His own image, said the Bible. God resided in each human being said the *Gita*. The Buddha and Mohammed affirmed the same truth. Gandhi imbibed strength through the faiths of all religions. Truth and non-violence are the vibrant symbols of a slowly emerging epoch of justice and peace. This is the crux of Gandhi's life and work.

In short, Gandhi inherited the best of Hindu religious traditions and yet revered the Christian Testament and Jesus Christ without ceasing to be a Hindu. His attachment to his ancestral religion was to this effect: "If you mean the historic Jesus, then I do not feel his presence. But if you mean a spirit guiding me, a presence nearer to me than hands and feet, than the very breath in me, then I do feel such a presence. If it were not for the sense of that presence the waters of the Ganges would long ere. This has been my destination, call it Christ or Krishna: that does not matter to me."

Commenting on the above statement of Gandhi, Prof. S. K. George, a true Indian Christian observes: "This statement of Gandhi, I believe is a crucial statement — a testimony to a living experience of spiritual power, borne out by a life of heroic activity, but meditated apart from Christian channels, and therefore testifying to a source of power beyond all labels, beyond and behind all historical manifestations of it in time and space."¹⁴

This positive assertion of an inner experience of spiritual power and equally so this deliberate denial of all exclusive claims — is really the mark of a true prophet of religion. In a similar vein, Gandhi observes: "I do not regard God as a person. I understand God to be a universal law. God, however, cannot be described in His fullness. You may give Him as many names as you like, provided it is the one God without a second." He added, "My Rāma, the Rāma of our prayers is not the historical Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, the King of

Ayodhyā. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second."¹⁷ Does not Gandhi come close to the Advaitic conception of the Absolute?

Gandhi holds truth above all as expressing accurately the idea of God. Gandhi refers to this truth "as an unalterable law governing everything that exists or lives. It is not blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings, that law which governs all life is God; law and law-giver are one."

Since truth is the highest being (*sadbrahma*) it necessarily follows that the attainment of truth can be considered as complete freedom. This truth is to be nourished not by hand-grenades, but by reverence for life — *Satyān nāsti paro dharmaḥ*. There is no religion or duty higher than truth to Gandhi, a view which finds full expression in every thought, word and deed of his.

It is true that Gandhi was influenced by all kinds of non-Hindu ideas, but he was deeply rooted in, and drew his strength from the *Sanātana dharma* of his religion — the *dharma* that rests on *ahimsā*, truth (*satya*), renunciation, *brahmacarya* and an equal love for all God's creatures. To find the truth within oneself one needs to practise the negative virtue of *brāhmacarya*. *Brahmacarya* means the concentration of all one's mental and physical powers upon the task of realizing higher values.

Fasting occupies a central place in Gandhi's philosophy of life. Of 'genuine fast' Gandhi claims: "It clenses the body, mind and soul." As in the case of Jesus, fasting was a prayer to Gandhi. Fasting according to Gandhi is not an act of coercion. It is the last weapon in the armoury of *ahimsā*. When human ingenuity fails the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer. It is a spiritual act addressed to God. Jesus and Muhammad fasted so as to see God face to face. Rama fasted so that the sea might give way for his army of monkeys. Gandhi fasted in order to become one with serving humanity.

From the above analysis, it would seem that the test whether a fast is violent or non-violent is the underlying motive. This resembles the Jaina opinion on the *Sallekana* (fasting unto death). If one eliminates the three *kaṣāyas*, viz., *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion)

and *moha* (infatuation) then one is not held guilty of suicide by putting an end to one's life through voluntary starvation. On the other hand, there is a remarkable difference. The Jainas observe *sallekana* purely for the sake of individual religious merit, while fasting for Gandhi was resorted to not only for achieving social and political goals but above all for purifying himself and others by non-violent means.

As important as purity and fasting is fearlessness (*abhaya*) which is indispensable for the growth of the other qualities. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality, but Gandhi's attachment to conscience was deeper still. It is immaterial whether this conscience was formed under Christian or Tolstoyan or Thorean's influences, or by Ruskin, Mohammad and Christ — that there was some influence from all of these few would deny or whether it was cleansed and polished by the practice of *brahmacarya* as he himself would claim; the fact remains that he saw himself as an interpreter of the Hindu *dharma* as it really is. Gandhi was in history what king Yudhishtira was in myth. The Christian ideal of the kingdom of God is the culmination and fulfilment of Gandhi's hope of God's sovereignty on earth — the *Rāma Rājya*. If the law of moral causation which is universal and ineluctable, is worked with a will, man and his environment in this life and the future will be changed so as to secure *Sarvodaya*, the highest good for all. The vision of *Sarvodaya* is definitely exalted and inspiring. To realise the goal is our prime concern. India is not for himself but for God and as the chosen instrument of God, for the entire humanity. If India could raise to that spiritual level that Gandhi has set for her, she would then open up a new path — the path of *Sarvodaya*, along which the rest of mankind could follow. And this spiritual level is the one on which unity has to be achieved if the unity is to be constructive. Since life is a unity and man is a part of that life, the racial solidarity of man must inevitably follow therefrom. We wish for the flowering of that life in a world enlightened by knowledge, guided by reason and united by love. It will not be an easy task to accomplish but accomplish it, we must. Let the spirit of Christ and Gandhi be with us in our onward march.

Section B

GANDHI AND KARL MARX

The two revolutionary systems of thought and action, the Gandhian and the Marxist have their significant relevance to the present day society. The Gandhian view of life and reality is to be argued in a manner that would meet the understanding and needs of modern man in our country and the world at large.

Gandhi and Karl Marx have made outstanding contributions to social and political thinking. While Marx professing 'scientific socialism,' propounds his theory as a guide to action for the 'revolutionary transformation of human society,' Gandhi who did not claim adherence to any set ideology, described his continuing quest in the realm of thought and action as 'Experiments with Truth.'

Amidst the great thinkers of the past, the twin names of Gandhi and Marx shine with a peculiar lustre. Both have deeply influenced men and minds and have left behind them a large following which is seeking to dogmatize and idolize their teachings and thoughts. Both have influenced the socialist thinking in our country and hence the importance of the study of dominant socio-political philosophies of Gandhi and Marx.

At first no contrast appears to be more basic or fundamental than that between Gandhi and Marx; the divergence seems to receive greater emphasis especially when we approach these two thinkers from the point of their political philosophies. Gandhi strikes us as a 'practical idealist' who offered a solution of human destiny within the framework of truth and love. Gandhi's life and thought is closely interwoven and involved with the practical issues of the day that one is likely to miss the larger background and context. One might at times, even forget the idealism on which his practice was based.

On the other hand, Marx strikes us as a social scientist, a philosopher, and a revolutionary thinker who showed to the whole world that philosophy of historical materialism is applicable to the totality of history.

An attempt to compare the two eminent but diametrically opposite personalities — Gandhi and Marx appear to be rather paradoxical. It is to be admitted that the application of Gandhian and Marxian principles and ideals have aroused and sharpened the consciousness of several crores of common people and let loose tidal waves of revolt and rebellion against the forces of injustice and inhumanity. The techniques adopted and practised by Gandhi quickened the creative and innovative genius of Indian people. It imparted a new moral tone and texture to public life in general. It generated an ethos of environment which affected the manifold aspects of human life.

The Gandhian process has moved forward through many crises and persecutions into the lasting triumphs of the spirit. It has also a modifying influence on the philosophic endeavours of the myriad nations of the world.

It is the considered view of all, that Gandhian thought has significant relevance to the modern world and that many things which have happened since he passed away have not diminished but heightened its relevance. This does not mean the literal acceptance of all his ideas and schemes — something which he himself neither expected nor advised. There is no closed system of his thought, for his approach to Truth was scientific. It was a search for Truth, involving the process of progressively discovering it through experimentation.

In the thought of every significant thinker, there are elements which may have temporary or local significance. People who wish to make the fullest use of his great contribution should, therefore, refrain from interpreting him literally and should be prepared to reinterpret his ideas so that they may be useful under different conditions and in various parts of the world. It is, however, necessary that in this interpretation, the basic elements of his thought should not be tampered with. These permanent elements will endure in spite of all the spectacular changes that may take place in the external conditions of human life in the coming decades of this century or in the next century. In

fact some of these changes may sharpen and intensify the significance of his ideas. For, whatever the precise shape of the social order or the political and economic set-up of the future, the human values which Gandhi stressed will always remain at the core of the good life — tolerance, compassion, love, justice and co-operation. These are not new values; they have been basic to the thought of most great religious and secular thinkers. What was new in Gandhi were some of the methods and techniques which he experimentally developed to make these values operative in contemporary life, in spite of the very unfavourable conditions that prevailed. It is particularly to these methods and techniques that scholars interested in Gandhian thought should turn their attention.

The central focus of my present analysis is not to evaluate whether it is Gandhi or Marx who provides a better alternative but to analyse their differences and to find out some similarities between them.

Ideologically, Gandhi and Marx stand far and wide from each other. To Marx, values are relative to class interests historically determined by the 'Law' of dialectical materialism. Marxian historical relativism tends to view values as a 'super-structure' of economic factors, of the 'relation of production' in a given historical perspective. They are propelled by the same dialectical power that moves history. To Marx, values would have a dual character and would reflect the class contradictions at every stage of history. It is universally known that the Marxists regard the 'law' of dialectical materialism and the struggle as purely 'scientific.'

In evaluating Gandhi's position, three things must be recalled: (i) that the criteria of any science lie outside that science itself; (ii) that the spiritual criteria which Gandhi brings to economics fit this description of criteria; and (iii) that all criteria necessarily deny autonomy to the science or process which they regulate. In other words, only the criteria are autonomous. This shows how important it is to establish criteria critically; and it also comes as a corrective to the mistaken notion of the autonomy of every science. When Gandhi locates progress in the realm of the spirit rather than of matter and quantity, he is offering such a critical norm to political economy. The norm is not the selfish man but the man of the community; man is community

so that not a single man is left out of the benefits of economics. Economics thus becomes a normative anthropology. All asceticism and self-denial involved finds its place in terms of the community and especially of the last man in the community. Gandhian spirituality is not away from economics. Asceticism does not live apart from the socio-economic sphere. This integral vision is the Gandhian criterion of economic activity.

Further for Gandhi, the socio-economic concern was the ethical concretization of his religious faith. Apart from these concerns the religion would have been for him a sterile dogmatism of a dead history. Yet he had or believed in no dogmas. He critically appreciated all the dogmas of Hinduism and translated them as meaning the ethical life which he concretized in the socio-economic context. The anthropological virtues of liberty, fraternity and equality were for him the pragmatic testing ground for the truth of the so-called virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Gandhi was a practical idealist who believed in the principle that ultimate values cannot be realized in practice. Non-violence, freedom and equality merely mean that social relations are to be converted through a process of successive approximations so as to move progressively towards the realisation of these values. Hence Gandhi's distinction between Absolute Truth and Relative Freedom, non-violence of the strong and non-violence of the weak, become significantly meaningful in our present study. "The virtue of an ideal," Gandhi said, "ever recedes from us...satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory."

Marx was not a speculative philosopher and scientist seriously engaged in analysing the nature of matter, motion and energy. Except for his doctoral dissertation, the only book where Marx discusses philosophical problems is *The Holy Family*. His interests primarily were in the fields of social and political philosophy and economic theory. Marx was thus a social scientist.

Though Gandhi appeared as a strange mixture of a mystic and religious person, he was essentially a scientist to the core in his attitude. He described his life as 'Experiments with Truth.' Gandhi was a

scientist not in the sense of man's control over nature but in the sense of an attitude for experimentation.

It is noteworthy that Gandhi's heritage is all-inclusive, well integrated or symbolic in terms of concepts and relatedness of concepts to practice. Let us remember that practice for Gandhi is not confined to practical effort. It is *satyāgraha* and its struggle against injustice, violence, inhumanity or for that matter against everything that impinges upon the rights of human beliefs.

Marx, in spite of his voluminous writings was a practical man. He believed in change. His essential endeavour was to dissect the 19th century Capitalism. He dreamt of a communist state. He was the first to indicate a definite plan of action. He was not content with merely questioning the present: he also forecast the future. He insisted that if a new social order had to be built, not even a vestige of the old order should remain. He put forth his strong conviction that only through revolution, a change can be brought.

Gandhi was also a practical man who believed in change. But the means he adopted were through peaceful methods. He felt that equality and social justice could be established only through non-violent method. A compromise with non-violence is not allowed by Gandhi under any circumstance. This non-violence however, is the non-violence of the brave. "I do believe," Gandhi remarked, "that when there is a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence." This has proved the strength of the non-violent revolutionary movement. There is no seize of power in a non-violent revolutionary method.

Gandhi advocated non-violence as a means and accepted the maxim that 'means justifies the end'. Marx believed in violent methods of gaining the desired results and admitted the maxim that "the end justifies the means." The Communists, Fascists, as well as most practical politicians believe in the maxim 'the end justifies the means'. This means that if the end is desirable, even means like cunning, deceit and violence are justified if they help us to achieve the end. Lawrence Dennis, an American exponent of Fascism observed: "The Fascist scheme of things is an expression of human will which creates its own truths and values from day to day to suit its changing purposes." In Mussolini,

words: "By the exercise of his free will man can, and must create his own world." In Lenin's words: "It is necessary to use any ruse, cunning, unlawful method, evasion, concealment of truth" for the attainment of the end in view. These theories are ethically wrong and dangerous in practice.

Gandhi upheld that good means alone can lead us to lasting peace and progress. History as well as present day experience makes it very clear that violence begets violence. The mere use of force or violence can never be an end in itself. According to Aldous Huxley: "A violent revolution cannot achieve anything except the inevitable results of violence, which are as old as the hills."

Amidst a war-torn, bewildered and chaotic world, Gandhi has done a signal service by stressing the simple but profound norm of the purity of means. Good ends cannot be achieved by evil methods. Gandhi's stress on the purity of means stemmed from his spiritual view of life. This spiritual approach to understand the significance of life was unacceptable to Marx. Gandhi sought the truth of life, most earnestly and intensely, the truth which when known and lived ennobles life and raises it to higher degree of consciousness.

Marx generated a new illusion: the illusion of the superiority of the social revolutionary consciousness. Marx tried to divest the human being of any spiritual soul and institutional consciousness. Marx enshrined a new Fetishism, the Fetishism of the Proletariat.

Gandhi could not be content only with the emphasis on purity of means. He would go a step further by prescribing not only purity of means but also purity of inner motives and intentions.

Gandhi refused to glorify the cult of expediency. According to Gandhi, what cannot be justified by inner conscience cannot be justified on political grounds. He held that the highest morality is the highest expediency. Gandhi would never permit any compromise with Truth even if it be in the interest of the country. He confessed having committed Himalayan blunders but never was he consciously guilty of any compromise with the purity of means. Even during the period of India's struggle for freedom, he had once remarked: "I am prepared to sacrifice everything for the liberation of my country but not Truth and Non-violence."

Gandhi transformed the eternal values of religion into relative truths of ethical principles and put them together as 'Ethical Religion.' Thus he proved the distinction between religion as such and the projection of ethical laws through morally justifiable social instruments into the release of social action. Marx resolved religion into human essence. Marxism does appeal as a religious utopia which enables man to forget the anguishes of the present in the hope that the future belong to him. Gandhi, on the other hand resolved human essence first into religion. Then he transmuted the process and resolved religion into human essence.

Suffice it to point out that Gandhi's humanism, has a distinct leaning towards spiritualism. He did not like to make any compromise with the view that man is the product of matter and consequently he was governed by natural laws. Marx's humanism, on the contrary, was the doctrine of "self-sufficiency of man in nature designed to counteract doctrines which support religion and God."

According to Marx, religion is an ideology. He regarded religion as "the opium of the people." In the *Capital*, Marx regarded religions as the reflexes of the social and economic situations. With increasing rationalization of the socio-economic process and the advance of positive science, Marx hoped that religion would die down.

It may be pointed out that Marxism is fundamentally mistaken in criticizing the role of religion. The religious scene is not merely a dependent reflex but can be autonomous. Religion as Gandhi pointed out has a tremendous force in the moral and social evolution of humanity. It has an appeal for some of the deepest cravings of man. Because of its materialism, Marxism accepts the relativism of ethics. It repudiates the theological, the metaphysical, and the intuitional approaches to ethics, and considers all ethical norms as relevant to a certain class situations in a specific historical era. But ethical relativism, ethical action may amount to successful rule of the game. Ethics may not be desired from a supra-cosmic agency, but still we have almost to absolutize some of the dominant canons of action and behaviour e.g., Truth. In the course of moral, social and religious progress, there has been achieved an agreed consensus on certain norms and goals and to call them relative would only amount to the repudiation of some of our priceless achievements.

For Gandhi, the centrality of man permeated the entire canvas leading from ontology to human concern with the most ordinary needs of the deepest intellectual and spiritual striving. At the centre of Marxism, lies human labour as a productive unit.

The moral ideologies of Gandhi and Marx differ sharply because Gandhi practised and preached 'personal morality' and Marx preached 'civic morality.' To Gandhi, morality was determined by religious considerations whereas according to Marx, it was determined by economic consideration. Gandhi opened a new dimension in political thinking by his insistence on ethicalizing politics, whereas, Marx politicalizes ethics.

As political philosophers, Gandhi and Marx were opposed to the state and sought to abolish it. To Gandhi, state was an organization of force and violence in a most concentrated form. But Marx opposed the role of the state, so far as it has been an instrument of exploitation of the 'have nots' by the 'haves.' Marx was a revolutionary anarchist while Gandhi, was a spiritual and enlightened anarchist.

According to Marx, in the development of history, a force comes into being called 'thesis.' In the course of time, as the thesis outlines its usefulness, it is attacked by an opposing thesis which develops out of it. This is called 'anti-thesis.' Out of their opposing tension, a new force emerges called a 'synthesis.' This, after it has lived its day, becomes a thesis to be opposed in turn by its opposite, or anti-thesis to form a new thesis and so on. But Gandhi believes that synthesis has more truth than the thesis and anti-thesis. His whole life was dedicated towards the synthesis of Indian Liberalism and Indian Extremism. Gandhi secularized religion and spiritualized politics.

The crux of the political ideologies of Gandhi and Marx may be stated as follows. Gandhi made a sharp distinction between *dharma* of the common man or the masses and that of the lower elite. Further, Gandhi's passion for freedom underlays his desire for revolution. Non-violence was both a creed and a way of life for Gandhi. To him, even the exception to non-violence have to be non-violently arrived at. He said volitional violence diminishes man.

On a deeper study of Marxism, we will find that the basic and fundamental category in Marx is not the freedom of subjective action but the operative mechanism of objective forces.

Let me now examine the crucial issue in Marxian thought *viz.*, Dialectical Materialism. Dialectics, as envisioned in Marxism, is the science of revolution. Marxist philosophy is nothing but the philosophy of revolution. And Marxists are revolutionary realists. Credit is due to Lenin and Mao Tse for regarding the Marxian dialectic not as a lifeless dogma but as a guide to action. The pragmatic or practical content of Marxist philosophy was even visible in Marx's insistence on primacy of practice in knowledge as well as in Mao's essay 'On practice' which combines Marxism with the old Chinese wisdom and practical knowledge.

Concerning the central problem of dialectics, it is submitted that conflict and interaction of opposite forces as the precondition for change and development within a system can be taken to be the essence of the dialectical problem. This principle operates in, and therefore its method is applicable to, the socio-economic and political institutions. In short, Marxism as the material dialectic, is a means, probably a very effective means, to an end which is presumably a very desirable and just end — an end to exploitation and conflicts.

Marx starts from the top and tries to seize political power by a coup and then use it for setting up the desired economic structure, while Gandhi starts from the bottom and seeks to bring about a revolution in the minds of men, makes them self-restraint and developed character.

Gandhi never accepted the classes, class struggle and class war whereas Marx accepted these. In Marx, Man's alienation assumes the social content of class struggle. In the incessant struggle, the state was always an instrument of exploitation. Hence Marx favoured the 'withering away of the state.' Gandhi also did believe that the State's power should be diminished and removed, leaving room for the establishment of a stateless society. Gandhi was for creating a movement of the people and to activate people to such an extent that the state becomes either redundant or at least rendered subservient to the power of the people, *janaśakti*. The difference in their approach is that Gandhi would never perceive violent methods for such establishment.

In the process of unfolding the manifold differences between Gandhi and Marx, let us not bypass some very important similarities.

Gandhi and Marx agree on the imperfections of modern society which is based on conflict and inequality. They detest the mechanical interpretation and emphasise the important role of man in bringing about necessary changes. Both of them were reluctant to portray the details of an ideal state of the future. Gandhi was disturbed by the results of industrialisation. With a remarkable similarity to Marx's criticism of Adam Smith, he rejected the notion of progress and advancement in the present order. If we differentiate between the temporal and the permanent, the local and the perennial, the essential and the non-essential, Gandhi emerges in a very different perspective in which the similarities between Gandhi and Marx emerge. Because of these similarities, it is conceivable to go to Marx's *Manifesto* and *Das Capital* from Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.

In the last analysis, the world destiny is in Gandhi and Gandhi is in freedom. When freedom speaks to us inwardly, we hear the voice of Gandhi. Gandhi remains incomparable because there is nothing to outshine freedom.

The contemporary Indian thought is the actual expression of an attitude which explodes the violent theory of progress. It believes in the organization of life on the dynamics of love. The strategy of Gandhi works out idealism, symbols and truth into the structure of human consciousness and releases new ecstatic energies.

No single revolution has succeeded like the Gandhian in breaking the gloomiest prejudices of history. Elsewhere the revolutionists who blew the trumpets of equality and fraternity have set up new power blocks in the wake of revolutionary surge. Gandhi has set the destiny of millions in our country in the true historical perspective. This inner adjustment has healed a social mutilation and enabled the nation to realize the authentic higher life.

From the dawn of history, we see a tragic conflict between the forces which enslave man and the symbols which elevate the human spirit. In the present day world, the purely economic and political creeds have failed to resolve the antagonism between national egoism

and world destiny. Totalitarianism, Communism and Dictatorship are a deflection of the universal energies from the path of freedom and creativeness to that of regimentation and servility. To-day, the nuclear weapons and a materialist morality are threatening to plunge mankind in a profounder slavery. The hope of man standing on the threshold of universal freedom is being frustrated by ideas of favoured race and spheres of influence. Therefore, a mutilated concept of progress cannot resolve the tragic problems of world history. A world that has lost its love, which is the motivation of creation, is turning to Gandhi whose philosophy anticipates the future.

"Every man," wrote Henry David Thoreau, "is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour." Gandhi fulfilled this task.

Gandhi helps us to ponder over how human social ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) had been evolving. If 'tooth for tooth and eye for an eye' seemed to be natural justice, the injunction "Thou shalt not kill" came into vogue. But man is sure to kill one day if he went on cherishing hatred. Therefore, "Thou shalt not hate" is a logical development if one is to be sure that there is no killing. 'Hate' however, is not only a negative conception but one which is the counterpart of 'fear.' It is, therefore, necessary to replace it by "Thou shalt love." Love is destiny.

Gandhi once declared that "all life is love." But these were not words to him; not were they an intellectual concept and knowledge. He understood the deep significance of it and experienced spiritually the unity of life underlying the diversity of it. This inner experience of oneness could express itself in love, that is, in identity of interest. How else can ultimate and basic identity of interest and its intimate experience express itself but in the form of selfless service, self-suffering, and self-sacrifice, if need be, for the object of love? Gandhi identified himself with the whole of humanity, its trials and tribulations, its sufferings, and its aspirations. Gandhi's whole approach lies in the service of Truth, the 'Law of Being' of humankind and its progress towards higher levels of living. To him, the object of both religion and politics was what Christ called 'the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.'

Speaking symbolically and with the simple eloquence of a prophet, Gandhi underlined the deepest inwardness of man's spiritual greatness in these words:

It is better to allow our hearts to speak for us than our words. God did not bear the cross only 1900 years ago but He bears it today and He dies and is resurrected from day to day. It would be a poor comfort to the world if it had to depend upon a historical God who died 2000 years ago. Do not preach the God of History but show him as he lives today through You.

When Gandhi was assassinated on 30th January 1948, one of his wellknown disciples, Miraben was moved to remark: "That sin is not of one man; it is the sin which floods the whole world from age to age and which nothing but the crucifixion of God's beloved can stem." Beautifully put, but in the blood-stained history of man, many of God's beloved have been crucified and tortured and put to the rack but it has not succeeded in stemming the orgy of blood which sits like a curse on the human race since the days of Abel and Cain.

Gandhi would have said that, if you want to work for the salvation of mankind, it could not possibly solve the problem which is a much more time-consuming and arduous business. Gandhi's own spectacular death did have a sobering effect for the time being but alas, what has been happening since, in this allegedly non-violent country, makes one wonder sometimes whether Gandhi was a reality or a pleasant, but incredible, dream that we are just privileged to have!

The illustrious motto of India till yesterday was: *satyam eva jayate* (Truth alone succeeds). Gandhi wanted us to observe and practice the principle underlying the famous Sanskrit verse: *Satyam brūyāt, priyam brūyāt, na brūyāt satyam apriyam*, meaning that "one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not to speak it if one cannot do so in a gentle way." It implies that there is no truth in a man who cannot control his angry tongue or his temper. In other words, when truth has to be enforced under compulsion, or when it gets sullied even by violence of expression, it ceases to be truth.

To-day, our esteemed Prime Minister has reformulated the motto of our country which reads, *śrama eva jayate* (Work alone succeeds or triumphs). This is also truly Gandhian in its perspective. Did not Gandhi lay emphasis on 'Śramdān' based on *Gītā's* ideal?

This world of men suffers bondage from all action save that which is done for the sake of sacrifice; to this end perform action without attachment.

Gandhi commented: "Action or work for the sake of sacrifice" means acts of selfless service dedicated to God. Let it be remembered that no work (*śrama*) has value in itself. Its value depends upon the spirit in which the work is done. As it is said:

Who sweeps a room for Christ's sake
Makes that and the action fine!

In other words, the worthwhileness of work depends upon awareness of the worthlessness both of the work and the worker, and the reality only of that which is not of the earth and remains entirely unaffected by the work (*śrama*) done — a paradox, but life consists of paradoxes. Perhaps this was one reason why Gandhi insisted that body labour was necessary for all. Perhaps, I think our Prime Minister too is laying emphasis on 'śrama.'

I wish to prophesy that the motto of our country for 2000 A.D. might be: *śāntiḥ eva jayate* (Peace alone triumphs). As we know, Gandhi was essentially a man of peace. He not only loved peace, he was a creator of peace and he played this role in spite of opposition and indifference on all sides.

Blessed are the peacemakers;
they shall be counted the children of God.

Blessed are the patient, they shall inherit the land.

Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy.

These are the words taken from Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*, to which the Mahatma often made reference.

The flowers of harmony will not bloom in the land, unless the sower sows thoughts of peace; thoughts of peace, living memories,

desires of peace, the outpourings of the human heart that are unmistakably in the interest of peace. Such an outlook Gandhi held is not possible unless a man has the right concept of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

Today, we are observing the 34th death anniversary of Gandhi. And the thought that, on an occasion like this, comes uppermost to the mind of every sincere Indian is:

“O Mahātma, thy country hath the need of thee.”

Today, dissention and strife on all sides threaten the independence for which Gandhi laboured so arduously.

Today, indiscipline and indiscriminate resorting to violence are rocking the very foundations on which Gandhi hoped to build the New India.

Today, intolerance and narrow parochialism, like insidious cancerous growth, are destroying the concept of the Secular State which Gandhi and Pandit Nehru gave their lives to achieve.

We are at the crossroads of history, Gandhi sought to prepare us for life in a disarmed world. We must pull out ourselves of the world of strife and hatred and be prepared to work unitedly with a sense of harmony and peace. Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to cope with it. It was in this spirit that Gandhi worked and prayed towards the realization of peace among men.

The three *ratnas* or jewels which Gandhi would like us to practice are: *Satyam*, *Śrama* and *Śānti* (truth, work and peace). These are the eternal values which Gandhi would prescribe in order to establish peace on earth and good will among mankind.

The modern world with its prevailing confusion of values and ends, has need to capture this vision of the *Gītā* and turn its course, in the beautiful language of the Vedic hymn:

asato mā sadgamaya,
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya,
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya.

"From the unreal lead me to the real; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality."

May the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi be a beacon of hope and courage to all of us.

It is as my humble tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi whose death anniversary is being observed today, that I have shared with you, in these three lectures, some of my elucidations on the supreme significance of the Mahatma's eternal message and its significant relevance to the present-day world.

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1. Sarvodaya and the Problem of Political Sovereignty

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— Dr R. BALASUBRAMANIAN, University of Madras

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