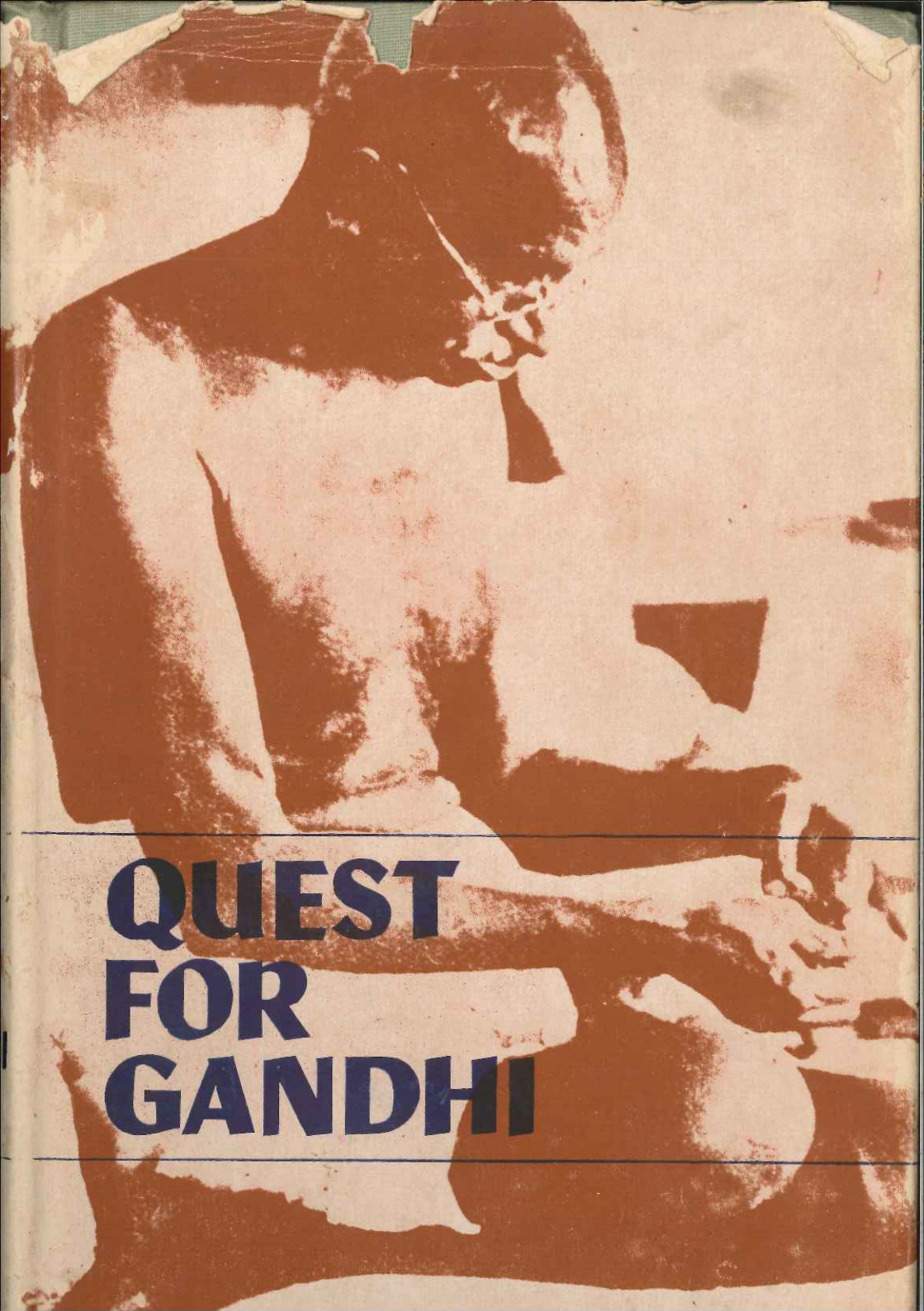


QUEST FOR GANDHI

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Edited by
G. RAMACHANDRAN
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PREFACE

During last thirteen years, *Gandhi Marg*, the quarterly journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, has not only helped enlarge and extend the scope and meaning of Gandhi study, but it has also provided countless scholars from the East and the West with a hospitable platform for the expression of unfettered opinion and judgement on every conceivable aspect of the Gandhian teaching. Some of these essays were included in *Gandhi: His Relevance for Our Times*, published by the Foundation in 1964, and reprinted in a revised and enlarged form in 1967.

The present volume is a further sampling of the wealth of diverse critical writing on Gandhi that the journal has helped bring to the surface. The real Gandhi eluded his nearest colleagues and continues to elude us all. *Quest for Gandhi*, it is hoped, will help reduce the distance between us and Gandhi.

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Introduction

This is the Gandhi Centenary volume of *Gandhi Marg*. For thirteen years now, *Gandhi Marg* has taken the mind of Gandhi to innumerable readers in India and in many countries of the world. We may claim that *Gandhi Marg* has now a standing of its own as perhaps the most authentic journal of Gandhian thought. It was Dr. Zakir Husain, the late President of the Republic of India, who once said to this Editor that if only a hundred good and active men and women in every country of the world would study and understand the mind of Gandhi as revealed in *Gandhi Marg*, then indeed would mankind find its way to a juster, fuller and more peaceful life on this earth. This tribute came of course from the high generosity of his mind for which he was so renowned. Dr. Zakir Husain was among those who took a deep interest in this journal, constantly warning us never to lower the standard of thought and expression contained in the pages of *Gandhi Marg*. In the present volume we have brought together some of the finest contributions which have appeared in *Gandhi Marg* during the last thirteen years. We earnestly trust that these articles will be as fresh and challenging now as when they were originally written.

The literature representing all that Gandhi said and wrote, biographical, interpretative and commentatory, would perhaps run into a hundred volumes. Literature on Gandhi continues to come in a growing stream from inside and outside India. Perhaps the world will take Gandhi out of India more and more and make him into a radiant and vital part of the total human heritage. We have taken care to include in this volume contributions covering in a kaleidoscopic manner almost the whole range of Gandhian thought and utterances. We cherish the hope that this would be a good reference volume for students searching for the mind of Gandhi as it reaches out in many directions and touches life at many points. It is heartening to find that the number

of such seekers is swelling from year to year. Research in the thought and work of Gandhi is spreading in some of the outstanding Universities of India, Europe and America.

Gandhi said repeatedly 'My life is my message'. This was no pious euphemism. It was literally true that more than all of Gandhi's spoken and written words was the testament of his life revealing more truly and fully all that he stood for. Poet Rabindranath Tagore once said that Gandhi the man was much greater than all his writings and talks. Of how few of the leaders of the world can this be said truthfully? Those of us who knew Gandhi personally in life, can vouch for it with certainty that while his thoughts and words were clear and came out of the depth of truth, it was the life he lived which, even more, pointed the way Godward through the transformed lives of men and women. In the words of Pandit Nehru, Gandhi lived the life of a supreme artist, integrating in himself truth, beauty and goodness in a manner never surpassed in the life of any other man of our time.

Politics has become the great preoccupation of people in our time. Throughout the world we see ruthless competition for power and aggrandisement in every school of politics. We have had even the classical statement of a well-known writer that politics has often become the last refuge of the scoundrel. But Gandhi purified politics. He even dared to say that his aim was the spiritualisation of politics. Some of us remember how the wise lifted their eyebrows at Gandhi's words. We have in history almost nothing comparable to the manner in which Gandhi purified Indian politics. Under Gandhi, politics became renunciation, humility, truthfulness and dedicated service of the people. Giants of our history like Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Rajagopalachari, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Rajendra Prasad had to come down, as the first step in entering the Gandhian arena of politics, from the heights of their great stations in life. For millions of the Indian people Gandhian politics meant nothing but sacrifice, suffering and service. Gandhi nearly succeeded in spiritualising the politics of his time in India. This

is not to forget how towards the end of Gandhi's life and during the period of the partition of India, our politics fell again into the dust and became utterly degraded. Gandhi died as martyr as he strove with all his might to redeem Indian politics once again.

Gandhi looked with clear eyes at the economic theories and practices of his time in India and the world. He was horrified to notice that economics had become the science and gospel of unbridled material prosperity at any cost, at the cost of your neighbour and the weaker sections of mankind and at the cost of all the moral and spiritual values which had become part of the great human heritage. With indomitable courage he refused to accept this as the final truth of economics in history. He stood out with all his strength for the reconstruction of economics, to make it more human and humane and in consonance with moral and spiritual values. He was no enemy of industrialisation but he insisted that industrialisation should keep the good of man in the highest sense at the centre of the picture. He ruled out exploitation of every kind. He called for the production of material goods needed for life to be organised in such a manner that both in the process of production and in that of distribution every man and woman would become an equal beneficiary. He firmly held on to the idea that no economic prosperity in society would be worth the name if it did not reach down to the last and the least in society equally with everyone else. This was economic revolution even though Gandhi insisted that the revolution should be nonviolent, without ruthless compulsions, killings, and liquidation. In economics as in politics the supreme test for Gandhi was the material and moral growth of man equally balanced one with the other. Gandhian economics still remains much misunderstood and awaiting a fuller study than so far done. Gandhi was no obscurantist in the area of economics. He stood for the fullest use of the material resources of the world consistent with the true happiness and moral advancement of every section of human society. It is certainly true that Gandhi did not believe that the ultimate good of mankind lay in the never-ending process of producing more and more material wealth and

comforts without reference to moral and spiritual values. No one is going to run away from this challege without committing intellectual and moral suicide. Gandhi proclaimed without hesitation that he aimed at the creation of a casteless and classless society to be achieved through nonviolent means. He sought to revolutionise not only the aims of development but equally the method of action which alone can lead to the achievement of the aims. He called his goal sarvodaya and his method satyagraha. Sarvodaya is the total good of all the people without any distinction of high and low, strong and weak, rich and poor, educated and illiterate and even the good and the wicked. Sarvodaya is a fuller and richer concept of people's democracy than any we have yet known. Satyagraha is the organised will of the people functioning through collective nonviolence. The time will come when these twin concepts and words will be reckoned as of greater significance than any other of their kind in the twentieth century.

Gandhi did prove up to a point in his own life time how sarvodaya can be achieved through satyagraha. Satyagraha includes education, legislation and nonviolent direct action. Satyagraha can paralyse every tyranny and make the violence of the tyrant inoperative. All the higher claims of culture, of music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture and philosophy are woven and interwoven into this integrated fabric of sarvodaya and satyagraha. Gandhi was devoted to every high claim of culture and civilisation but he laid down at the same time the inescapable condition that the whole of culture and civilisation must feed and swell the Ganga of a just, free, peaceful and equal human society. What the millions could not possess he turned away from with relentless logic and determination. He made himself into the dust of India in order that out of that dust might arise the noblest human civilisation and society yet known in history.

He understood the power of hate equally with the power of love. He was not blind to the power of hate, anger and violence to effect radical changes in society. But he saw beyond mere changes and knew that no change could function and go forward self-evolvingly unless such change came from the power

of love becoming nonviolent action. Like the scientists who discovered the mighty power of matter in every atom, he discovered the incalculable power of the spirit embedded in every human mind. Like the atomic scientists again, he released the powers of love from every human mind and linked them in a vast chain reaction producing the ultimate power of the spirit. If the nuclear bomb is the ultimate of material and destructive power, then satyagraha is the ultimate of moral and creative power. It was Gandhi's unique logic that love when it acted can and must act only nonviolently. Who can run away from this logic? True nonviolence represents the final crystallisation of the human spirit linked to the divine spirit. Here in a nutshell is the metaphysics, the ethics and the logic of Gandhi.

The relevance of such a man and his message now and for all time is self-evident. It is a relevance which has become all the more imperative in this crucial epoch of human destiny. Man today faces the risk of complete annihilation in a nuclear war. In the words of the great Martin Luther King the choice is not at all between nonviolence and violence but between nonviolence and annihilation. As the world goes on grappling truthfully with the challenge of creating a just, free and peaceful human community the relevance of Gandhi will escalate from day to day. It is not the relevance of Gandhi to our time that is in question but the acceptance of that relevance by the human mind today. That relevance shines out like light in the darkness. Will the world see that light and follow in its effulgence or will it close its eyes and grope its way to the edge of the precipice after which there can only be the armageddon fought out with atom and hydrogen bombs. That would be the end of all civilisation and culture and even of life itself on the earth.

How clear then is the choice? We are convinced beyond a shadow of doubt that the genius of man which has helped the world to survive every catastrophe so far will continue to sustain mankind and that sooner than later we shall all follow the light that comes streaming down from Gandhi.

G. RAMACHANDRAN

Can Nonviolence Change Society?

GEOFFREY ASHE

At the moment, nonviolence is out of fashion. There is a modish tendency to say that it died with Martin Luther King and that the future of radical social change is in the hands of the violent. Spokesmen for this view seldom bother to discuss whether violence is likely to be more effective. It has a mystique, an air of getting things done, which seems to absolve them of the obligation to prove that it actually does.

Joan Baez put the case in a truer light when she said: "Nonviolence is a flop—the only bigger flop is violence". But since it is fashionable to echo the first part of this remark and forget the second, with increasingly ugly results, the topic we are discussing in this article has a timely urgency.

Our question is not whether society can change without violence. In some ways it obviously can and does. However, that is not the point. We are asking whether there can be such a thing as an effective nonviolent strategy of revolution or radical reform. And I would urge in the first place that much of the present lack of faith, and even of interest, is due to the misunderstanding caused by a negative term like 'nonviolence'. We are told that South Africans are tired of being nonviolent. Because Martin Luther King practised nonviolence, he was widely spoken of as "the last voice of moderation". Nonviolence is equated with mere abstention from hitting people, peaceable demonstrations, restraint, at most passive resistance. Thus it is made to sound respectable, and futile.

Yet we all know (or should know) that the American Civil Rights movement wasn't like that at all. It meant militant action, civil disobedience, sit-ins for desegregation, and the heroic acceptance of physical suffering, hatred, loss, martyrdom. Readers of William Bradford Huie's *Three Graves for Mississippi*

will know how far some of the Civil Rights workers were compelled to go, and willingly went, in the effort to convert and to elicit a response from the ruling people. One thing at any rate was proved, that nonviolent direct action can maintain a revolutionary spirit, a pure intent, without weakening or compromising. It need not get blunted like, for example, parliamentary socialism. Hence Dr. King's murder.

But what about the results? I think we must distinguish two. First, there was a solid measurable achievement which is not to be sneered at. Ten years ago a city like Cleveland could not have elected a Negro mayor. We should not delude ourselves that the colour of the mayor makes much difference, or, in general, that Civil Rights legislation and the upward movement of middle-class Negroes can be counted as even a beginning of social revolution. Yet we should admit that they do reflect a certain shifting of attitudes, a certain success in putting issues on the map which were once off it.

Granted, the nonviolent Civil Rights agitation did not do what its sponsors hoped for. It has largely given place among militants to Black Power, with different methods and objectives—really a revival of Marcus Garvey's gospel in the 1920s. But the nonviolent movement was the precondition of Black Power itself. It brought a Negro awakening which could probably not have happened in any other way. This was its second major result.

To sum up, the outcome of militant nonviolence in the US has been partly an achievement that is perfectly genuine, and more or less on the lines intended, but far short of the social transfiguration which Dr. King dreamed of; and partly an unleashing of vast incalculable forces, which may take American society farther into change, but are by no means what he desired.

This by way of introduction. The supporter and the opponent of violence can both make out a case. To apply the lesson we shall have to dig deeper.

Behind Martin Luther King is the figure of his acknowledged master Gandhi, who launched militant nonviolence on its career. In talking about Gandhi I don't want to give an impression of

my own total discipleship. He was a man of his time in some respects, a dated person, even though he did live into the era of the atomic bomb. He inspired a cult of such notorious fervour that those who cite him today are apt to sound like worshippers of a dead god, followers of an obsolete cause, living in the past. That is not my own position. I believe that Gandhi was wrong in some ways, but overwhelmingly right in others, and that westerners—even western admirers—have seldom fully understood him. Today the point is to rediscover what is of permanent value in his teaching and practice, to re-state this and re-apply it in modern contexts. For all I know, the end product will not always look very Gandhian. That doesn't matter. I am not concerned with revivalism.

Well now, observe that the pattern of Martin Luther King's career repeats a similar pattern in Gandhi's. The Mahatma too maintained a brave and untarnished integrity throughout his Indian campaigns. He too scored a number of limited successes, in such areas as the rights of women and untouchables. He too awakened his people through militant nonviolence as no one else could have done. But he too saw this awakening unleash forces beyond his control and at variance with his wishes. In the last years of the British Raj, violence grew to such an extent that he said he was a failure. When touring India myself in 1965 with a Hindi-speaking companion, I tried asking ordinary people, chosen more or less at random, what Gandhi meant to them. They spoke of him chiefly as a patriotic hero, a sort of Moses, a moulder of the national moral character; they never mentioned noviolence. That aspect of him seemed to have been covered up by events and consigned to oblivion.

So to judge from the parallels between these major experiments, the Indian and the American, there ought to be general conclusions wnich we can distil out and apply in future. I prefer, for the present, to consider Gandhi rather than King, partly because I know more about him, and partly because he was, after all, the originator.

Careful study discloses some unexpected facts. Gandhi is thought of as a pacifist. Yet almost the last political act of his

life was to approve of the Indian army's intervention in Kashmir. He is counted as a patron saint of the peace movement. Yet he never founded a peace organisation, or took much interest in the peace movement of his day. He is supposed to have inspired modern protest activities, and such manoeuvres as mass sit-downs in Trafalgar Square. Yet he never led or took part in a protest demonstration as we think of them now, and he explicitly condemned the dharna tactic which was the Hindu version of the sitdown. Again, he is portrayed as a leader who pursued a political end, swaraj or self-rule, by nonviolent means, ahimsa. Yet in fact his priorities were the other way round. "Ahimsa," he declared again and again, "comes before Swaraj". In 1922, when he might have attained swaraj by sacrificing ahimsa, he called off his campaign instead—an act of supreme moral courage which cost him much support.

Gandhi described himself as a teacher of truth and noviolence, in that order, and the proper name of his technique is satyagraha, truth-force. For him the primary virtue is courage—unflinchingly carrying out the demands of truth, or of God, the terms for him being interchangeable. The "nonviolence of the brave" is always the correct way to do this, but it is better that campaigners should be violent on behalf of a just cause than that they should be cowardly and betray it. This Gandhian firmness-in-truth is a moral and religious act, and Gandhian nonviolence is neither a mere abstention nor a mere tactic. Whether or not we accept the religious viewpoint in a doctrinal sense, we must think of satyagraha as something that happens at a level of human nature corresponding to the deepest convictions, the level where saints and martyrs are made, the heart of the personality, where the religious believer encounters what he regards as God. This is the kind of nonviolence, not a nonviolence which is merely negative or external or tactical, that we can fairly ask doubters to consider.

May I be allowed an autobiographcal note? I was of military age during the Hitler war, and it put my faith in nonviolence to a test such as few pacifists today have to endure. I could not believe, and I still don't, that fighting was futile or that there

was nothing to choose between the two sides. One side *was* better, the fighting *did* achieve a good end—the downfall of Nazism—and a mass refusal to fight *would* have delivered up mankind to avoidable horrors. The 'practical' kind of pacifism based on disillusionment with the previous war just didn't work. Nor could I join the cynics who dropped out—who sneered at patriotism, courage, honour, the military virtues, the ordinary folk who supported the war effort. That sort of sour isolationist pacifism did't work either. I could not and cannot persuade myself that that side of human nature is wrong or stupid, however horribly it may be perverted.

No: when it came to the point although I then knew very little of Gandhi, I arrived at much the same position alone. I refused military service not for 'rational' reasons which I could defend, but because I had to. The Absolute commanded, giving no more than a dim vision of something better which I had to affirm. I claim no particular virtue. But it was then my experience, and it is still my belief, that the nonviolent mode of life and action must be grounded on something at least psychologically like a religious conviction. And if you turn to such a problem as the race situation in the US or South Africa, I think it bears me out. Only something at least psychologically like the heroic virtue of the saint or martyr can take the measure of these unspeakable things.

But we still have to ask whether even this can change them. At first sight the task may well look hopeless, not only because of the strength of the opposition, but because nonviolence is apt to seem inherently a creed for the few, which can never move many. The cliche "It's against human nature" is not entirely absurd. It does appear to involve a kind of narrowing-down and priggishness, rejecting all that part of human nature which responds to the emotional call of copybook virtues, like patriotism, and loves colour and excitement and martial music and conflict.

Gandhi himself, with his vegetarianism and asceticism, doesn't escape from that reproach. Yet if we follow the line which he at least indicated, I think we can see a solution. If we can

make satyagarha that sweeping human transformation which he proclaimed—if we can make it deep and broad enough—we shall find that the touch of the Absolute (or God, if you will) can revalue human nature in all its aspects, and keep human contacts open. The Indian national movement did not reject the everyday virtues, or estrange the masses who cared about them. Patriotism, courage, loyalty and the rest could all find scope, but in a good guise instead of a destructive one. Even military-type bands could play, if they played in Congress processions. Truth-force at its height was rich and potent enough to satisfy the human needs which violence itself appeals to. On balance, the satyagrahi was a bigger person, not a cutdown person.

Here I respectfully part company with some pacifists. I do not believe in pruning away the dark passionate side of human nature as necessarily violent and evil. In saying this I go beyond the more respectable passions like patriotism. If I refer to D. H. Lawrence, to the myth of Dionysus, to the theories of Jung, I hope my meaning will be taken. Or consider that terrifying book, the autobiography of the late Black Muslim leader Malcolm X, a precursor of Black Power. There is a tremendous and tragic quality in his racial passion which it would be no earthly use trying to preach away or tone down. The question is not: Can you emasculate such a person? but: Can you turn him the right way, make his fury fruitful? Before he was murdered, Malcolm X did begin to go through that personal reorientation, and it came through his discovering the real Muslim religion instead of the false. I am not talking religious revivalism, I am simply arguing that this is the level where our true campaigners must be formed.

Or to come nearer home, look at a phenomenon which is very different but not to be taken lightly—that species of dissent which used to be called Hippie and is now called Underground. As you know, the Underground is a distinctly Dionysian business. It goes in for a turbulent mixture of Anti-Education and Che Guevara and the Maharishi and Hobbitry and the Higher Pop. Orthodox pacifism will ignore the Underground only at its own peril. We need to integrate the two, and it will take a pretty

potent philosophy to do that and hold the result together.

I would not claim that Gandhi provides the whole of that philosophy. But he does provide the makings of it and teach some of the right attitudes. For him, nonviolence was never just a mode of public behaviour in occasional crises. It was a way of thinking and living that went on all the time. If we grasp how this essentially religious vision worked out in practice, we shall begin to see not only why he succeeded to the extent that did, but also why some of the lesser nonviolent movements of the West have (to put it mildly) failed.

What in fact was the basis, the starting-point of an actual Gandhi campaign?

In satyagraha you are required, first, to analyse a wrong state of affairs, probe it to its fundamentals and define the issue exactly. Very likely there will be at least one make-or-break issue, where the evil of the situation comes to a head. Here you can make a stand and perhaps offer civil disobedience. For instance, in the pioneer satyagraha which Gandhi led in South Africa, anti-Asian discrimination came to a head in a particular registration law, which his campaigners publicly broke. Then and later he expected them to know just what they were fighting about, to do it openly and honestly, and to be responsible citizens otherwise. He never preached mere anarchy or indiscriminate law-breaking.

Always satyagraha means grasping truth with a precise insight and affirming it nonviolently. The first of the two main points which I want to make is that nonviolence must be seen in close relation to the truth which for Gandhi was divine. The basic need in getting this relation right is the nonviolence of the mind. In Gandhi's view, if you don't start with this and keep to it, you will fail to evaluate the situation correctly. You won't arrive at truth, or at any rate, you won't retain your hold on it. Your insight and the consequent action will be wrong. As he put it, "Anger must be banished, and fear and falsehood". John Arden made an impressive play out of this idea, *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. Sergeant Musgrave tries to expose colonial oppression to people at home, but his own embittered violence traps him into conduct which discredits his message.

One of the implications is that it is not enough to be simply against an evil, to be simply 'anti'. If your thoughts are centred on a hate or an opposition ('Ban the Bomb', for instance) you may or may not accomplish some good, but you will eventually go astary. This is not a dogma of ethics but a plain statement of fact, and I have seen it confirmed in several of the protest movements of the past decade. Purely 'anti' behaviour involves a species of mental violence and is self-stultifying.

This conception of hanging on to a positive truth underlies even the better known practical part of Gandhi's nonviolence. Having grasped the precise nature of the Wrong, you assert the Right by appropriate methods: non-cooperation, civil disobedience, or setting up counter-institution. The action must be nonviolent, and not for moral reasons alone. If you let yourself become violent you will lose your hold on truth. As samebody else put it, "In war, truth is the first casualty". For Gandhi violence of mind or body is a kind of falsification. To right society's evils we must overcome the merely 'anti' attitude and the catastrophic misdirection of passion that goes with it in practice. When it is a case of someone whose mind is warped (say) by racial prejudice, we have no trouble in seeing how his hates make a fool of him; but the same can happen with hates that masquerade as pacific or progressive.

That, I think, is why Gandhi had so little to do with protest parades and sitdown demonstrations, though both were known in his India. They were simply hindrance and rancour. Even in his own supreme act of protest, against the salt tax in 1930, his followers didn't march about with placards saying "Down with the Salt Tax". They defied the Government monopoly by making salt for themselves. The protest took a positive form—a free salt industry, a working model of what the industry ought to be.

This famous campaign brings me to the second of the two ideas I want to convey. We all probably have an image of Gandhi teaching Indians to use spinning-wheels. Hand-spinning was part of what he called the constructive programme. It may come as a surprise to some of you, as it did to me, to find that

he always insisted—even at the height of civil disobedience—that the constructive programme was the key to success.

What did he mean? The spinning itself was an economic weapon in a fairly obvious way. It gave peasants a little extra income, and helped Indians to supply their own needs and squeeze out British textiles. But the constructive programme was far wider in its bearings. When Gandhi reorganized the Congress in 1920 he planned that it should be a democratic mass movement for building a whole new society in the shell of the old, a citadel of constructive dissent. Indians were to set up their own cottage industries, their own courts, and so forth—a Counter-Society or Counter-Establishment alongside the British Establishment, and capable of defying it. He proposed a bottom-up, do-it-yourself revolution based on the village masses. I found in my own tour that while most Indians have forgotten nonviolence, they have remembered this. Over and over again they told me: "He taught self-reliance".

His ideas about his new counter-society took shape in close relation to his philosophy. It was to be a different sort of society, nonviolent, based on love, on the 'good of all' or Sarvodaya. Nonviolence meant no oppression or coercive conflict—hence, freedom of the worker from big-business exploitation, of women from the dominance of the male, of untouchables from caste tyranny, and so on. Most of the causes which Gandhi fought for can be reduced to the one great principle of the nonviolent society, built up through the constructive programme. It was to be the training school and recruiting ground for civil disobedience when required; but it was to go on all the time.

Gandhi's counter-society never progressed far enough to play a decisive role in India. Today Vinoba Bhave is carrying it on in the development known as Gramdan, which has reorganised tens of thousands of villages on a cooperative basis. Western conditions are of course utterly different, yet we have seen piecemeal attempts at free counter-institutions even in Britain, in the arts and education—by Arnold Wesker, for instance, in Centre 42, which had the object of enabling artists to control their own media instead of being subject to the coercion of commercial

interests. In view of current political disillusionments it is interesting to find that Gandhi's theory of the nonviolent society included a searching critique of western democracy, as government by the imposed will of parliamentary majorities—a critique which Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narayan, the former Indian Socialist leader, have carried further into a new concept of democracy that escapes from the party system. This is an aspect of the nonviolent philiosophy which is still too little explored in the West.

Now at last we are approaching the answer to our main question. There is no doubt that nonviolent campaigns can achieve important ends . . .within limits. Nor is there any doubt that nonviolent campaigners can maintain their idealism, as people seldom do who get entangled in political and other machines. But in India and the US alike, there seems to have been a kind of sound-barrier. Beyond a certain point the idealism goes on but you get diminishing returns. Furthermore, the awakend forces unleash other forces, alien ones, that pervert the aim. In India, Gandhi's revolution contracted its horizons during the 1930s and was largely swept aside by the politics of Nehru. In America, the coherent movement of Martin Luther King has been thrown into an embittered confusion, with larger promises but uncertain performance.

To break through the sound-barrier and alter society—as Gandhi saw, but failed to make enough of his followers see—the key lies in the constructive programme: in building a different, nonviolent human community within existing society, going on and growing and keeping up a momentum all the time. We have scarcely begun to grasp the potentialities here. The nonviolent way of life is not just hazy kindness. Gandhi's India was profoundly unlike any western country, yet we can use his hints to devise western applications. We can open up new vistas in political organistation, in industrial organisation, in the arts and race relations, in sex relations and family life. We can agree, I believe, in considerable detail, what a western nonviolent society would be like. And we can begin building it.

I am not denying the need for protest and dissent. But the

people who do the protesting and dissenting must be affirmative and creative themselves. They should be developing a distinct mode of life on a do-it-yourself basis. A community of people spread through society and actually living differently is the proper context for all nonviolent campaigning.

Five years ago there would not have been the potential for such a community in Britain or America. Today I think there is. Everywhere we do see scattered aspirations after direct action outside the system, instead of wire-pulling through established parties and institutions. One thinks of artistic and educational projects like those I have already glanced at, and do-it-yourself social service bodies like Shelter, and, of course, the student activists, and the Hippie or Underground element dropping out to form their own little love-communities. I believe there are thousands of people prepared to break free at least to some extent, and to do something themselves in unison, if they are given the right lead. This implies some coordinating centre, perhaps like Gandhi's Ashram at Sabarmati which was the powerhouse of his movement. But I will defer that question.

Gandhi's constructive programme, I repeat, does show how the sound-barrier might be broken, how nonviolence might change society. He himself failed to inspire enough people with the full vision, and hence failed to build up his own counter-society far enough to carry the impact it should have carried. But that factor contains our own encouragement. We need not accept the reproach that nonviolence has been tried as a means of changing society and found wanting. In the full sense which Gandhi at least sketched, it has hardly even been tried. Violence as a technique has a start of thousands of years. Nonviolence, as a social philosophy of action, is only just learning its first steps. The future lies all before us. The great experiments and realisations are yet to come.

As our nonviolent society takes shape, it must of course be equipped to perform acts of protest and civil disobedience and to influence and convert the established society all around. But it must live by a life of its own, bold and experimental and

questing, not a life drawn purely from hate of things outside however evil these are.

You may feel that I am calling for a movement which will not, so much reassert nonviolence against the current taste for violence, as transcend the whole argument in a new synthesis. You may feel that I am calling for something which needs a new name, possibly Gandhi's own 'truth-force'. If so, you may be right. I do know this, that I will only support a nonviolent movement if it is more positive than violence, more exciting, more courageous, more beautiful and terrible, and—may I say it?—more fun.

If the nonviolent community begins to grow, we have the ultimate answer to the prophets of violence. It is not, "We have a better techniqe than you for achieving social justice". This may be so, and I hope that in the fullness of time it can be proved so. But the ultimate answer is: "Whether we succeed or fail on the immediate issue, our work can go on growing through victory, defeat, and stagnation too, as yours cannot. We are learning, and moving toward the ideal in society, all the time; you are neither learning nor moving toward the ideal—only, at most, toward a painful and limited improvement which your own spirit of violence will very likely turn sour. We, to the best of our humble ability, are demonstrating a model to live by; you are not."

I am holding out no prospect of a future dramatic overturning, a storming of the Bastile. The revolution must be a permanent one, like Trotsky's. The only clearly defined point is the beginning. To make that beginning is the best retort we can give to the advocates of violence, and the best service we can render the spirits of Marin Luther King, Gandhi himself, and the rest of our martyrs.

And one last point. In my own study of Gandhi I have often been impressed by his power to surprise. His most characteristic ideas were unexpected, against the currents of thought around him. He has taught us never to be bulldozed by trends, never to worry much about what will appear logical or along approved lines. The most Gandhian way of debating an issue like this is

to shed every inhibition and say whatever occurs to you, however absurd or wayward it sounds. If you do that, may be nine ideas out of ten will actually be absurd or wayward. But the tenth is the one to watch for. All Gandhi's major ideas were 'tenth ideas'. He is the apostle of the clean break and the fresh start. Given the will to make a fresh start, the revolution can begin here, now, today.

The Vrata in Ancient Indian Culture—and Gandhi

V. M. BEDEKAR

It is well known that the observance of eleven vows (vratas)[1] formed an integral part of the discipline and training of the inmates af Gandhi's Satyagrahasrama—his preparing ground for the nation's nonviolent freedom-fighters and social workers. Himself a living example of a noble striving to practise these vows in his life, he expected that a satyagrahi should practise them in his life. The first seven of these vows had already been an integral part of the ancient religious heritage of India and every religious seeker after God or liberation (moksha) aspired to observe these vows in his life. By introducing these vows into the life of a satyagrahi, Gandhi took them out of their predominantly religious setting and placed them in a social milieu. Thus he gave the ancient vows a completely new orientation and enriched them with a new socio-ethical content. Ever keenly alive to the needs of the modern age and to the challenge which India with her hoary ancient culture had to face under foreign domination, Gandhi further boldly supplemented the traditional vows with four new ones: viz., bread labour, observance of svadesi, abolition of untouchability and reverence for all religions. This new social orientation that he gave to the orthodox religious vows is one of Gandhi's most significant contributions to Indian and world culture.

1. The eleven vows are: ahimsa (non-injury), satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (continence). asangraha (non-possession), asvada (control of the palate), bhayavarjana (fearlessness), sarirasrama (bodily labour), sarvadharmasamanatva (reverence for all religions), svadesi (using goods made in our own country) and sparsabhavana (abolition of untouchability).

In order to judge the revolutionary character of this contribution, it is first necessary to indicate briefly the content of the concept behind the ancient Indian idea of the vow in general and the five great vows in particular.

The ruling concept behind the idea of the vow in ancient Indian life and literature appears to be the association of the vow with the divine will or divine regulation. As such it was considered to be inviolable and its practice was aimed at personal purification and spiritual elevation. The history of the word vrata throws an interesting light on the meanings and associations which the word acquired during its long literary history.[2] One of the oldest meanings of vrata, as found in the Rigveda, is "divine will or command".[3] It is said that the whole world obeys the command or the vrata of God. "The behaviour of things, according to their inherent nature, is the observance on their part of the vrata of God. "That the organ of speech speaks, the eye sees, the fire burns and the breath breathes is explained by the fact that they observe the vrata".[4] The will and the regulations (vrata) of God rule over nature and society. The order observable in nature and human society was considered to be due to the vrata of God (say, as Varuna). Men should pray to God and should never infringe His order. Any conscious or unconscious infringement of the divine order is to be expiated for by imposing on oneself some sort of self-denial in order to propitiate God. This self-denial took the form of fasting or some restriction in food and was called vrata. Thus there was the kshiravrata, the vow of living only on milk, or the madhuvrata, the vow of living only on honey. Such a kind of vrata was deemed to purify the performer and elevate him spiritually. In course of time, the sense of the word vrata was extended to connote any observance or activity raised to the position of sanctity or sacredness. Thus we find the Upanishads[5] saying, "One should never slight food; food should be made abundant; that is the

2. See "*vrata*" in the *St Petersburgh Worterbuch* by Roth and Bohtlingk.
3. *Rigveda*, 7.31.11.
4. *Brhadaranyaka-Upanisad*, 1.5.21.
5. See *Taittiriya*, 3.7ff; *Chhandogya*, 2.11ff; *Maitrayani*, 4.3.

vrata. Food and shelter should never be refused; that is the vrata. One should be generous; that is the vrata. [Learning the Vedas, observing the duties allotted to one's station in life—that is the vrata."

Thus the word, vrata, during the course of its semantic evolution, while retaining to a greater or less degree its connection with the concept of the divine will or rule and having personal purification and spiritual elevation for its aim, came gradually to include, however indirectly, certain socio-ethical obligations.

The idea of the vrata thus came to include, in course of time, the five cardinal observances of non-injury, truth, non-stealing, continence and non-possession, as found systematized in the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali. The *Yogasutras*[6] mention these five cardinal observances as the five yamas forming the first and the integral part of the eightfold yoga and further state that the absolute practice of these five observances irrespective of place, time and position is the mahavrata or the great vow. It must be remembered that this consummation of the development of the five yamas into the mahavrata was intended for a yogin who undertook to live a life of complete renunciation. The observance of this mahavrata, which was meant to purify the yoga-aspirant of all taint, was a preparatory stage for one set on the path towards self-realization. Its observance does not appear to have been enjoined on one leading an active life in the midst of the hurly-burly of society.

In older religious literature prior to the *Yogasutras*, we find these five great observances not mentioned under one group of the mahavrata, but each handled individually with its progressively developing implications. For instance, there was a time when non-injury was not considered applicable in the sphere of sacrifices, which permitted the ritual killing of animals. But soon, there was a revolt against the sacrificial killing itself and non-injury took on a comprehensive connotation. Sacrifice came to lose its original literal sense and took on an allegorical meaning; e.g., the life of man was conceived allegorically as a

6. Yogasutras, 2.30.31: ahimsa satya-asteya-brahmacharya-aparigraha yamah; jati-desa-kala-samayan-avachinnah sarvadharma mahavratam.

sacrificial session in which non-injury and truthfulness were the gifts (*dakshina*).[7]

It is interesting to note in this connection that even prior to the composition of the *Yogasutras*, the Buddha and Mahavira had preached these five religious-ethical vows as forming an essential part of the discipline enjoined on their followers. Jainism, however, distinguished, with regard to these observances, between the monks and the lay followers. They were to be practised, as fas as possible, on a small scale by the lay followers and were, therefore, called anuvratas, "the small vows"; while they were to be practised absolutely in all their rigour by the monks of the Jain order and were, therefore, called mahavratas, or "the great vows".

The development of the idea of the mahavrata so as to include in it the five great observances of non-injury, truthfulness etc. gains significance in the light of another dominant trend in ancient Indian religious and philosophical thought. This trend may be characterized as an all-powerful urge to achieve an ideal of mystical perfection. This mystical perfection may be, as indicated by the mystical pantheism or monism of the Upanishads, a mystical union with the Universal Being for which the spiritual aspirant longs; or it may be, as in Buddhism and Jainism, a state of absolute Quiescence and Blessedness free from every kind of taint or impurity. But this longing for mystical union or perfection and the exaltation accompanying its consummation presupposed and also entailed an attitude of world-negation and renunciation. The ethics which these aspirants after Brahman or Nirvana practised were designed to keep them pure and free from any taint or impurities engendered by violence; they were meant to be practised in solitude, away from society or with the minimum of contact with society and had hardly any social content. There appears to be no positive urge behind these ethics of renunciation to improve or ameliorate the lot of our fellow-beings.

7. See *Chandogya-Upanishad*, 3.16-17: purusho vava yajnah . . . atha yat tapo danam arjavam ahimsa satyavachanam iti, ta asya dakshnah.

In the *Mahabharata*, for instance, the observances of non-injury, truthfulness, non-possession etc. are characterized as the attributes of those who have taken to the path of renunciation. For instance, a recluse who undertakes to practise non-injury and friendliness towards all creatures is described as one who regards the village or the resort of human beings as a haunt of death and the forest, on the other hand, as the dwelling place of gods.[8] This attitude implies that the practice of these ethical principles was not actuated by a positive love of mankind, but was undertaken only negatively as a shield to protect oneself against any impurity or taint which contact with the world might bring in its train.

It may be remembered in this connection that the ishtapurta, i.e., the philanthropic practice of some liberal persons of building caravansaries and tanks, and planting trees for the use and comfort of the public, had come to be considered as a part of avidya or karma and was looked down upon as an inferior kind of activity beside vidya or knowledge.

The ideas of compassion (karuna) and friendliness (maitri) are, no doubt, found woven into the texture of ancient Indian culture. On this basis, it is sometimes argued that they reveal a positively altruistic character of our ancient culture. But a critical study of the passages and situations in which these ideas are expressed would probably show that these, like the practice of non-injury, are more negative than positive in their import. The idea of compassion never bred a positive spirit of service to mankind. The highest state which was the goal of man's endeavour in ancient India was the state of supreme detachment, unaffected by any desire or passion. The feeling of compassion, however, was considered as a fall from that state of highest detachment and was, therefore, looked down upon as a thing to be studiously put away. The following lines from the *Mahabharata* may be

8. See *Mahabharata* (edition: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona), 12.169.23: mrtyor va grham evaitad ya grame vasato ratih: devanam esha vai goshtho yad aranyam iti srutih. This verse is of frequent occurrence in the *Mahabharata*.

said to put in a nutshell the above point of view with regard to compassion: "One should realize that the mind gets tainted with attachment on account of compassion towards creatures. One should, therefore, be indifferent to compassion, knowing that this worldly existence is after all the result of karma."[9] The stock instance to illustrate the fall from spiritual height on account of susceptibility to compassion is that of the Puranic Bharata or Jada-Bharata who fell from his high spiritual estate because he had been once seized with a strong feeling of compassion for the young one of a deer.

The idea of karuna or compassion, no doubt, dominated the later Mahayana Buddhism and compassion was regarded as one of the greatest attributes of the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva, it is said, is so full of altruistic compassion that he would not covet final liberation or nirvana until all mankind—nay, all beings—get liberated.[10] But as the subsequent history of Indian social conditions would show, this fine altruistic sentiment, no doubt indicative of the spiritual exaltation of the aspirants, remained largely confined to thought and prayer and hardly issued forth in action designed to bring about a vigorous social change.

When we go over from this ancient religious and cultural background of the vratas or vows, and ideas connected with them, to the consideration of the vratas as they were viewed and

9. *Ibid.*, 12.208.4: athava manasah sangam pashyed bhutanukampaya: atrapy upekskam kurvita jnatva karma-phalam jagat. Nilakantha, while commenting on the above verse, quotes in support the following apt verse from the *Bhagavata:* kripayapi kritah sangah patanayaiva dehinam; iti samdarshayan aha bharatasyaina-poshanam. "The story of Bharata's feeding a deer is told in order to show that attachment formed even under compassion leads to the fall of human beings."

10. See *Bodhicharyavatara*, 3.6-19. The following verse, perhaps coming from a source under the influence of Mahayana Boddhisattvism, is included in the *Ashrama-Bhajanavali*, a book of psalms and prayers got prepared by Gandhi for the use of his ashrama: natvaham kamaye rajyam na, svargam napunarbhavam; kamaye duhkha-taptanam praninam artinashanam. "Kingdom I crave not, nor heaven, nor liberation from rebirth. I crave only the removal of the woes of those who are afflicted by pain."

practised by Gandhi, we shall find that their ancient aim has received at his hands an entirely different orientation. He had, no doubt, before him, as aspirants of old had before them, the goal of self-realization or God-realization. But paradoxical as it would seem, it was this very urge for self-realization which led him to the service of humanity. He was never tired of emphasising that the goal of self-realization is to be realized, not by withdrawing from the world, but by the service of humanity: "If I found myself absorbed in the service of the community, the reason behind it was my desire for self-realization "[11] "The only way to find God is to see him in his creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find him apart from the rest of humanity."[12]

Gandhi, no doubt, favoured renunciation, but it was not the renunciation of the world so much as the renunciation of selfish desires that he had in view: "All of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity".[13] It is such a kind of noble renunciation which, according to him, "differentiates mankind from the beasts".

Viewed superficially, against the background of ancient traditional thought and ideas, Gandhi's life and creed would appear to be full of paradoxes. But these apparent paradoxes are resolved in a higher synthesis which his life and thought tried to embody. As already pointed out, it was his desire for self-realization that led him to the service of humanity. Again it was his deep religiosity which made him take an active part in politics: "I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics".[14] He viewed life as an integrated

11. *All Men are Brothers: Life and Thought of Mahatma Gandhi as Told in His Own Words* (UNESCO, 1958) chap. 1, p. 19.
12. *Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose (Navajivan Publications) item 83.
13. *Ibid.*, item 85.
14. *All Men are Brothers*, chap. 2, p. 69.

whole, the whole gamut of man's activities constituting one whole indivisible symphony. "You cannot", he said, "divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity."[15]

It was this overmastering goal of the service of humanity which changed in Gandhi's conception of the vratas, their traditional orientation. The vratas were viewed by him as a course of rigorous discipline, preparing the social worker of his conception for more efficient and effective service of humanity. The practice of the vratas was calculated to raise the quality and fibre of the worker according to the measure of intensity and devotion which the latter would bring to bear on it. While expounding the meaning of vrata, Gandhi says: "To do at any cost something that one ought to do constitutes a vow. It becomes a bulwark of strength. A man who says that he will do something 'as far as possible' betrays either his pride or his weakness. Even as no businessman will look at a note in which a man promises to pay a certain amount on a certain date 'as far as possible', so will God refuse to accept a promissory note drawn by one who will observe truth 'as far as possible'."[16]

According to the ancient conception, the yamas are taken as one indivisible whole and the practice of all of them was considered indispensable for preparing the aspirant for self-realization. Gandhi also conceived them as an indivisible whole, in which every one of the vratas formed a powerful link giving strength to the whole armour: "It is well to bear in mind that all the disciplines are of equal importance. If one is broken, all are broken. Therefore, it is essential that all the disciplines should be taken as one."[17]

Among the five vows (yamas) which were indissolubly linked with one another, ahimsa or non-injury is regarded by the ancient Yoga as paramount and supreme while the rest of the vows are

15. *Ibid.*
16. *From Yeravada Mandir* (1945) p. 51-52.
17. *Harijan*, 8 June 1947.

regarded as subservient to it, in the sense that ahimsa includes all the other vows.[18] Gandhi, however, as a practical idealist, regarded truth as paramount and supreme and nonviolence as a means or necessary corollary to it. Truth was his God and the approach to truth according to him, was through love, i.e. nonviolence: "When you want to find truth as God the only inevitable means is love, i.e. nonviolence."[19] With his abundant sense of humility, he never claimed a monopoly of truth but offered a relative, practical definition of truth to be followed by an earnest seeker in actual life. "Truth is that which you believe to be true at this moment, and that is your God. If a man worships this relative truth, he is sure to attain the absolute truth, i.e. God, in course of time."[20] "The Golden rule of conduct is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall see truth in fragments and from different angles of vision."[21] Because the truth, even after one honestly strives after it, may be different in every case, the observance of nonviolence was regarded by him as a necessary and indispensable corollary of the observance of truth. Thus while he regarded truth as the supreme end, he regarded nonviolence as the supreme indispensable means of achieving that end.

His conception of truth included the removal of individual and social injustice. Nonviolence was to be pressed into service

18. The *Vyasa-Bhashya* on *Yogasutra*, 2.30 remarks that non-injury is the root of all the rest of the *yamaniyama* observances, which have only one aim, viz., to subserve *ahimsa* and make it purer: tatra ahimsa sarvatha sarvada sarva-bhutanam anabhidrohah uttare cha yama-niyamas tanmulas tatsiddhi-paratayaiva tatpratipadanaya pratipadyante tadavadat arupakaranayaiva upadiyante.

Dr S.N. Dasgupta (*Yoga Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, 1930, p. 302), while explaining how, according to the ancient Yoga, if there is a conflict of duties, e. g. between truthfulness and non-injury it is non-injury which is to be followed, points out that Hemachandra in his *Yogasutra* relates that one Kaushiki, having told the truth in pointing out the way of the bandits to the villagers, had violated the law of ahimsa and had gone to hell.

19. *All Men are Brothers*, chap. 2, p. 70.
20. *Ibid*, p. 72.
21. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *op. cit.*, item 67.

for securing justice: "The first condition of nonviolence is justice all around, in every department of life."[22]

Thus the ancient vows of truth and nonviolence which belonged to the religious, mystic plane of individual salvation were given by Gandhi a new social dimension and significance. He also offered a rationale of the connection between truth and nonviolence and made it applicable to human affairs. This revolutionary orientation which he gave, with his mighty "Experiments with Truth", to the ancient conception of vrata in general and of ahimsa in particular has been regarded by profound world-thinkers as his unique contribution to human civilization. For instance, Albert Schweitzer, the Nobel Laureate, remarks as follows, with regard to this contribution of Gandhi: "The ancient Indian ahimsa is an expression of world and life negation. It sets before it no aims that are to be realized in the world but is simply the most profound effort to attain to the state of keeping completely pure from the world. But Gandhi places ahimsa at the service of the world and life-affirmation directed to activity in the world."[23] "The fact that Gandhi has united the idea of ahimsa to the idea of activity directed on the world has the importance not merely of an event in the thought of India but in that of humanity."[24]

The vows of nonstealing and nonpossession, which were also vitally linked to truth and nonviolence according to the ancient Indian concept, were given by Gandhi the widest connotation in terms of nonviolence so as to include abstention from every form of exploitation. "The principle of nonviolence necessitates complete abstention from exploitation in any form."[25] The vow of continence (brahmacharya) was taken by Gandhi, as of old,[26] in its widest sense, as the search for truth through the control

22. *All Men are Brothers*, chap. 4, p. 85.
23. *Indian Thought and its Development* (1936), p. 231.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
25. *All Men are Brothers*, chap, 6, p. 123.
26. Vachaspatimishra on *Yogasutra*, 2.31 remarks: indriyantaranyapi tatra lolupani rakshaniyani. ("Even other senses seized by greed should be controlled".)

of all the senses: "Let us remember the root-meaning of the word brahmacharya. 'Charya' means course of conduct; brahmacharya, conduct adapted to the search for brahman, i.e., truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz., the control of all the senses. We must entirely forget the incomplete definition which restricts itself to the sexual aspect only."[27] Brahmacharya, even in its restricted sense, was not conceived by Gandhi as a vow to be practised in isolation from the world but one to be observed in the midst of social situations. He remarks: "Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the purdah. It must grow from within and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation."[28] One can only recall in this connection the very daring experiments which he had undertaken in this field during the last days of his life.

Another pointer of the original social orientation which Gandhi gave to the ancient vows is provided, as already indicated above, by the addition of four new vows to the ancient list: "Patanjali has described five disciplines. And for this age the five have been expanded into eleven."[29] The four additional vows which he added to answer to the needs of the modern age are: bread-labour, svadeshi, abolition of untouchability and reverence for all religions. The very recital of the names of these vows would show with what remarkably true insight of a practical genius Gandhi had judged the shortcomings and the requirements of modern Indian society. With the vow of bread-labour, he provided a sound antidote to the attitude of parasitism into which the class of religious men in general had, consciously

27. *From Yeravada Mandir*, p. 10-14.
28. *All Men are Brothers*, chap, 11, p. 161.
29. *Harijan*, 8 June 1947. This statement means that six more vows have been added. But besides the five vows, those of the control of the palate and fearlessness had already formed part, in one form or another, of the discipline and training of the ancient spiritual aspirant. It is, therefore, the remaining four which, according to us, are the real new additions by Gandhi.

or unconsciously, degenerated. In ancient times the chief means of sustenance of the recluses—whether sannyasins or bhikkus—were religious alms. Religious alms were regarded, in those times, as highly respectable and, no doubt, blessed him that gave and him that took them. It must be mentioned to the credit of the monastic order of ancient times that even in taking alms it was seen that only the humblest remainder of food was accepted and the least inconvenience or hardship was caused to the householder who gave the alms. The religious mendicant, it was enjoined, "should approach for alms, when the smoke has disappeared from the kitchen, when the last embers of the kitchen fire have died out, when pestles have been laid to rest, when the members of the household have finished their meals and when the hour of setting the dishes has already passed."[30] But the practice of religious alms is evidently an anachronism in the modern age and Gandhi, taking inspiration from the nineteenth-century western thinkers like Ruskin,[31] rightly made bread-labour a vrata. Bread-labour was calculated to make the worker a productive and useful member of society and put him in direct touch with the vital needs of the community.

The incorporation of svadeshi into the list of vows was a constant reminder of the political and economic subjection to which the Indian people had been reduced and of the dire need of employing them usefully and preparing them for the struggle for freedom. The enlistment of the abolition of untouchability among the vows was a most powerful and bold bid to eradicate the age-long canker which had eaten into the vitals of Hindu society. The vow of reverence for all religions was a clarion call for energising and strengthening the spirit of tolerance which lay subdued, dormant and supine for ages in Indian society and for putting down the spirit of religious and sectarian intolerance which was fostered by superstitious people and interested foreign rulers.

30. *Mahabharata*, 12.269.9: vidhume nyastamusale vyangare bhuktavajjane atite patrasamcare bhiksham lipseta vai munih".
31. See *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by M. K. Gandhi (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1958) p. 220-221.

We have attempted to indicate above, in considerable detail, the revolutionary orientation which Gandhi gave to the concept of the ancient vratas. We have also given many quotations from his writings in support of our statements. It should be remembered again that what these quotations embody are not the reflections of an academician occupied in mere thought construction. They are, on the other hand, the live utterances of one who always strove to match thought with suitable action, to live every word that he uttered. Every one of these utterances was backed by a life intensely vibrant with activity aimed at transforming society. If we bring before our mind the great panorama of the mighty movements that Gandhi led and energised—the Indian freedom movement, the khadi movement, the Harijan movement—and the technique of social change and organization that he evolved—satyagraha or nonviolent resistance as a moral equivalent of war—we will be better able to appreciate the marvellous change which he brought about in the concept of the ancient vrata.

After all that has been said above with regard to the new orientation that Gandhi gave to the concept of the ancient vratas, it must be pointed out that his view was not secular, in the sense that it was restricted only to this world and had nothing to do with the idea of God or other-worldiness. Gandhi was essentially a man of religion. The roots of his mystic personality lay in other worldliness and he had a transcendantal faith in God. Just as resignation or surrender to God (isvarapranidhana) was regarded by Yoga as an essential element in the make-up of an aspirant,[32] so also with Gandhi, faith in and surrender to God formed the bedrock of his vrata observances. As he said, "Without an unreserved surrender to His grace, complete mastery over thought is impossible. I am realizing the truth of it every moment of my striving after that perfect brahmacharya."[33]

32. See the *Vyasa-Bhasya* on *Yogasutra*, 2.1: ishvarapranidhanam sarvakriyanam paramaguravarpanam tatphalasamnyaso va. ("Resignation to God is dedicating all actions to that Supreme Master or renouncing the fruits of all actions".)
33. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *op. cit.*, item 62.

Gandhi's aim was the realization of God or the highest self and he was in this religious sense a direct descendant in the line of the devotional mystics of old. The only difference was that his way of self or God-realization lay through the service of humanity in this world. His inspiration came from an ineffable craving for a mystic vision of and communion with some Higher Power beyond this world. Though he was engaged in activities which were, to all appearances, secular, i.e., directed to the amelioration and uplift of human beings on earth, he could tap and draw on the same ecstatic sources of boundless faith and elemental energy which only a mystic is believed to command. Gandhi presents a unique and amazing phenomenon—the first and, perhaps, the last in human history—combining harmoniously a deep mysticism rooted in the best religious tradition, with a robust secularism working for ends realizable in this world, in the best tradition of humanism, on a scale never seen or heard of before.

Gandhi and the Concept of Love

DONALD H. BISHOP

Attempts to define genuine love are as old as mankind, for the inadequacies of his relations with his fellowmen have plagued man since the dawn of conscience. In this essay I shall discuss several criteria or characteristics of such love and relate them to Gandhi's life and thought.

One criterion is non-possessiveness. Only love which does not seek to possess its object is true love. The term 'possess' has several denotations: to make an owner or holder of, to have dominion over, possessing oneself of another carnally. Reflection helps us to see the fallacy of possessive love. There are only two things we can possess. One is objects, the other that which is within. We can have or possess a sense of inner calm, serenity, tranquility. We can be master of our attitudes, feelings and emotions. The choice is ours. We can possess objects too—land, houses, clothes. In their case however possession is only temporary. We do not have absolute control over them. Time corrodes them and death strips us of them. In actuality we are but stewards, not owners, of all we possess. What is true of things is even more so of persons. No one can possess another, even in the name of love, except at the sacrifice of the other's dignity and worth. To own, be master of, have control over another is a denial of the freedom, integrity and selfhood of the other. Genuine love involves an attitude of non-possessiveness, of stewardship, not ownership. It consists of a deep care and concern for the fullest possible growth and development of others rather than seeking to control, dominate and have them for one's own.

A second criterion of love is non-coercion. Love cannot be coerced. A person cannot force another to love him. Love cannot be compelled or commanded. It must be given voluntarily or it is not love. True love exists only when one gives oneself to another freely and not fearfully. Love is the result of a mutual relationship; otherwise it is not love. Often we hear it asked, "How can I make him, her or them love me?" The answer is that we can't. There is only one thing we can make, or remake, and that is ourselves. Our love will be returned only if we are worthy or try to make ourselves worthy of the love of others. Such a truth is strikingly simple but often overlooked. We are loved only if and when we try to make ourselves worthy of love. Can we expect others to love us if we do not make such an attempt? To be loved is not an inalienable right, as many seem to think. Rather, it is an obligation, on the human level at least. It involves the duty or responsibility of making ourselves lovable. No one can expect another to love him just because he exists as a human being. One can hope to be loved only if he tries to make himself worthy of another's love and if he does those things which may evoke a response of love from another.

There are other elements in the criterion of non-coercion. Coercive love seeks to impose restrictions on the object of love while its opposite does not. In a coercive relationship the lover attempts to impose his norms, standards, or terms upon the loved. Coercive love thus becomes self-demanding, not self-giving. On the other hand, genuine love exists as one attempts not to shape the other into one's own image but to help the other become his or her best or highest self. Finally, real love rejects coercion as a means to an end or goal. No matter how good one may believe the end to be, using coercion to attain that end will make it both impure and impossible of attaining.

The third criterion of love is unconditionality. Genuine love is love which is given unconditionally, that is, without prior conditions or insistence upon return. The term conditional has several implications: made or granted on certain terms, something agreed on as a requiste to the doing or taking effect of something else, a circumstance essential to the appearance or occurrence of something else. It comes from the Latin "conditio", meaning compact or agreement. A conditional agreement is one

which will be carried through only if there is an assurance or guarantee that certain conditions will be met. "I will do this if and only if you will do that." This is contrary to the nature and spirit of love. Genuine love is given without strings attached. It is what certain philosophers have called "disinterested" love, or in St. Paul's words "love which seeketh not its own". It is love given for its own sake, unmotivated by result or reward. When reciprocity is insisted on, when prior conditions are set up, love is reduced to a commodity, a thing to be traded and bargained for. But genuine love cannot be bought and sold. This is because, to use philosophical terms, it falls in the category of the ontological and not the empirical. Of course there is much joy and rejoicing when love is reciprocated or returned, but it is not insisted on as an apriori condition.

We may note further that genuine love is constant. It continues to be given, even when its opposite is returned. It "keeps no score of wrongs", as Verrier Elwin wrote in his book, *A Philosophy of Love*. Also true love consists in the taking of the first step toward reconciliation for example, even if it involves risks or laying oneself open. Where there is genuine love, there is a willingness to make the first overture even if one cannot be sure of how it will be responded to. This is because unconditional love is based on faith, not fear. It is grounded in the faith that one's love will be reciprocated, ultimately if not at first, because it will transform and purify him who is the object of such love. Selfish or conditional love does not have such a power; only unconditional, disinterested, or unselfish love has the capacity to do so. While genuine love is unconditional, it is not given promiscuously, inadvertently or blindly. Love must be generous but at the same time discerning, to use a Hindu term. There are times when unlimited generosity may do more harm than good. Charity in the western sense may be a suitable, temporary expression of one's love for another. Genuine love goes further, however, and seeks means of alleviating the need for charity itself. It attempts to bring about conditions which will enable the other to be free and self-supporting.

In the fourth place there is no manipulation or exploration in

genuine love. He who has such love does not use the loved one for his own ends. One of the most basic differentiations we can make is the means-ends one. Reality may be divided into that which consists of ends and that which is means, and many of our problems today could be solved more easily if that distinction was adhered to. For example, things or objects fall into the category of means. Persons however come under the second category; they are ends in themselves and not means to others' ends. Genuine love upholds this distinction and principle, while false love does not. Instead it seeks to manipulate and use others as means. Manipulative love is exploitative love also. It attempts to get all it can, giving as little as possible in return. The fallacy or weakness of exploitative relationships, even if they are mutual, is that they are tenuous. They may collapse at any time. What happens when one of the two's capacity of mutuality is exhausted, or when one does not have as much to give in return? Love cannot be viewed in terms of a mathematical equation. It is not an empirical, I-it relationship. It is, to use Buber's words, an 'I-thou' one. True love involves inner communion, not external exploitation. It is premised on the sacredness and therefore the inviolability of persons. Only by refusing to use others as means to our ends do we, as Erwin points out, regard "life other than our own with equal reverence".

Finally, genuine love, is inclusive love. As in the relationship of a man and a woman in marriage, such love includes but goes beyond the physical. The physical is not outlawed but is a prelude or stepping-stone to a deeper mental and spiritual union. In actuality the three cannot be separated and put in a sequential order, for even physical union to be satisfactory has as a prerequisite mental and spiritual mutuality. In genuine love the physical and spiritual are intertwined and reinforce each other. They make up a totality which cannot be separated into self-contained components.

A second characteristic of inclusive love is that it rejects any distinctions in regard to the objects of love. Such love refutes differences of race, nation and creed, viewing them as unnatural

and artificial boundaries to be superceded. One loves another person regardless of race, creed or nation. The friend-enemy dichotomy is not accepted either. One loves the enemy as well as the friend, for he sees in the so-called enemy a potential friend. Similarly one loves the unlovely as well as the lovely, because he recognizes in the unlovely the potentiality of loveliness. One difference between false and genuine love is that in the latter one views others not as they are but as they might be. A love which rejects distinctions affirms that there is only one race, the human race; that there is only one kind, mankind. From a philosophical standpoint love falls in the category of a universal, not a particular. Thus the objects of love must be set first of all in the context of the general. This implies, for example, that the individual is a citizen of the world first and only secondarily of a particular geographical unit. That we should love our neighbour is generally accepted. The essential question is who is my neighbour. Genuine love extends the concept of neighbour to a universal level and is satisfied with nothing less.

A third aspect of inclusive love is that it is unlimited in amount. Some view love as a lake with an outlet but no inlet. Therefore the more love they give to others the less they have for themselves. Others however view love as a lake with both an outlet and an inlet. The more the love which goes out the more that will come in. Love does not diminish by loving; instead it increases. Finally genuine love is inclusive in that it unites instead of dividing. Inclusive, as a term, has as one meaning the opposite of divisive. Where there is genuine love there is a oneness of subject and object, of lover and loved, of one and the other, while false love only leads to divisions and disunity.

We find many examples in Gandhi's writings of his philosophy of love fulfilling these basic criteria. The most outstanding is his association of genuine love with ahimsa. Ahimsa is the use of nonviolent means to achieve ends believed to be good. Gandhi was very insistent on the close relationship of means and ends, even stating at one time that they are convertible terms. At another time, using analogies from nature, he declared that

"the means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree".[1] He characterized the reasoning of those who disagreed as "the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed".[2] Gandhi's strong conviction in this regard rested on the basic meta-physical principle of similarity of cause and effect. Every effect has a cause and the effect is like the cause. That like produces like is an unalterable law of reality. In religious terms it would mean, as Gandhi said paraphrasing Christ, that "we reap exactly as we sow".[3]

The love that Gandhi believed in led him to staunchly reject the use of evil means no matter how good the goal. For him a good end will be corrupted and not reached if wrong means are used. This is a very significant aspect of Gandhi's thought and as applicable today as in Gandhi's times. "Impure means result in an impure end,"[4] he often told his coworkers, and illustrated it by saying, "one cannot reach truth by untruthfulness".[5] For Gandhi violence was the most impure means and most contrary to the love he believed in. Nonviolence, he said, "is the first article of my faith, and the last article of my creed".[6] "I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes," he said, and "if violent means are used there will be a bad result"; conversely, "no good can produce an evil result".[7] He then went further and asserted that it is a basic principle that what a man gets is retained only by the same means by which it is attained. Thus "a thing acquired by

1. Homer A. Jack, *The Wit and Wisdom of Gandhi*. Boston, The Beacon Press, 1951, p. 88.
2. Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*. London, Longmans Green and Co., 1959, p. 82.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Op. cit.* p. 83.
5. *Ibid.*
6. K.T. Narasimha Char, *A Day Book of Thoughts from Mahatma Gandhi*. London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1951, p. 8.
7. Jack, p. 89.

violence can be retained by violence alone, while one acquired by truth can be retained by truth alone".[8] Gandhi believed that the use of violence involves one in a vicious circle. Its initial use necessitates further use to hold what one has secured by it. Violence is infectious, Gandhi declared, and stated that "history teaches us that those who have, no doubt with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them have in their turn become a prey to the disease of the conquered".[9] Gandhi condoned not only secularists but religionists also for the use of force. "Even men who have been considered religious have committed grievious crimes",[10] he said, because they have used religion to justify the use of force.

The pragmatist claims that Gandhi's love manifested in nonviolence will not work in the practical world. Gandhi himself had such doubts at first, until he tried and discovered that it did. The pragmatist's pessimism is a result of his ignorance of the nature of genuine love. For one thing, it rejects the taking of revenge. "Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself",[11] Gandhi wrote in *Young India*. He was strongly influenced by Christ's statement in the Sermon on the Mount: "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." His own religious heritage impressed him in the same way even more:

> "For a bowl of water give a goodly meal;
> For a kindly greeting bow thou down with zeal;
> For simple penny pay thou back with gold;
> If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold.
> Thus the words and actions of the wise regard;
> Every little service tenfold they reward
> But the truly noble know all men as one,
> And return with gladness good for evil done."[12]

8. Jack, *ibid.*
9. Gandhi, p. 95.
10. Jack, p. 88.
11. Char, p. 6.
12. M.K. Gandhi. *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth.* Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1927, p. 25.

Not only does genuine love reject revenge but it insists that we must eradicate from our very minds the concept of enemy itself. "It is a man's imagination that divides the world into warring groups of enemies and friends. In the ultimate resort it is the power of love that acts in the midst of the clash and sustains the world,"[13] Gandhi wrote in *Harijan*. As the Buddhist would say, the concept of enemy is an illusion we are under and which we must rid ourselves of before we can be at peace with ourselves and the world.

In the second place the pragmatist's pessimism is due to his rejection of faith as it is related to love. Gandhi's love was grounded in faith. One must have faith in the essential goodness of man. One must have faith that love will work; otherwise one will not even take the first step. Gandhi had this in mind when he said, "Someone has to make a beginning with a faith that will not flinch".[14] Gandhi recognized that there is no absolute guarantee that love and nonviolence will work in actual life situations. One can only have faith that it will and then go ahead and try. "Hatred can be overcome only by love,"[15] Gandhi wrote and then proceeded to act on that belief. Like Plato, Gandhi believed that there was an inner quality to love which could bring out the best in even the hardest-hearted. "Love compels, it does not coerce,"[16] Gandhi said. There is something about it which evokes a response of love, when it is given freely and fully. Such love can only be given in faith, faith that love can conquer and overpower even the worst men by its innate attractiveness. "Whenever you are confronted with an opponent conquer him with love...this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done,"[17] Gandhi stated. Gandhi believed that only love produces permanent results. In an early issue of *Young India* he wrote, "Experience convinces me that permanent good cannot be the outcome of untruth and

13. Char, p. 13.
14. Jack, p. 40.
15. Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, p. 107.
16. Char, p. 88.
17. Gandhi, *op. cit*,. p. 36.

violence", and in a later issue he added, "Hatred ever kills, love never dies. Such is the vast difference between the two. What is obtained by love is retained for all time. What is obtained by hatred proves a burden in reality, for it increases hatred. The duty of the human being is to diminish hatred and promote love."[18] Gandhi recognized that genuine love may necessitate suffering but he insisted that it is the only way. One may have to undergo the wrath of the opponent until the power of love has had time to work. Such suffering would be effective as nothing else would, Gandhi believed: "suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle".[19] Looking back over man's past, Gandhi said, "History is replete with instances of men who by dying with courage and compassion on their lips converted the hearts of their violent opponents."[20] Regarding his personal faith Gandhi said, "Faith in the conquering power of love and truth has gone through my inmost being and nothing in the universe can ever take that faith out of me."[21]

There are pragmatists who admit the validity of love and nonviolence on the level on personal relationships but reject it as applicable to group and national relationships. Gandhi could not accept such a dichotomy. "Some friends have told me that truth and nonviolence have no place in politics and world affairs. I do not agree...their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along,"[22] Gandhi said. He believed that ahimsa was a social as well as a personal virtue: "I hold that nonviolence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of nonviolence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale."[23] It was Gandhi's radical optimism regarding human nature that led him to believe this. "The religion of nonviolence is meant not merely for the rishis and the saints. It is meant for the common people as well",[24] he wrote. All are capable of practising it with the right training, encouragement and leaderhip. Gandhi's greatness lay in providing these for his people and numerous successes on a massive scale were the result.

18. Char, p. 20.
19. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
20. Gandhi, *ibid*, p. 97.
21. Char, p. 94.
22. Gandhi, *op, cit.*, p. 89.
23. M.K. Gandhi, *My Non Violence.* Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1960, p. 85.

In order for such love to work one must believe in loving unconditionally. One's love must go out to all mankind. As Gandhi said, "Nonviolence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown-up people—provided they have a living faith in the God of love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When nonviolence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts."[25] It is unconditional in that it is extended to friend and foe alike: "It is no nonviolence if we merely love those that love us. It is nonviolence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the harer is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it."[26] It is unconditional in that it is giving freely and without demanding a return, as two of Gandhi's statements show: "Love becomes a sordid bargain when it asks for return or compensation; it degrades. Spontaneous service of love purifies and elevates"[27]; and, "A love based on the goodness of those you love is a mercenary affair; whereas true love is self-effacing and demands no consideration".[28]

We have seen some examples of how Gandhi's love was genuine love. That he had not realized it fully in his own life he

24. Char, p. 5.
25. Nirmal K. Bose, *Selections From Gandhi*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1948, p. 147.
26. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. 86.
27. Char, p. 58.
28. Jack, p. 69.

quite willingly admitted. "I am painfully conscious of my imperfections. . . I lay claim to no superhuman powers. I wear the same corruptible flesh as the weakest of my fellow beings wear,"[29] he wrote. He regretted the compromises circumstances had forced him into: "My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal".[30] His greatness lay in part in that he never gave up trying to reach full self-realization in love even while knowing that it was impossible except in the life to come: "Man will ever remain imperfect, and it will always be his part to try to be perfect. So that perfection in love or non-possession will remain an unattainable ideal as long as we are alive but towards which we must ceaselessly strive."[31]

29. Bose, p. 300.
30. Jack, *Wilt and Wisdom of Gandhi*, p. 198.
31. Bose, p. 8.

Gandhi as I Understood him

CHESTER BOWLES

It has been said that there is scarcely an individual on this earth whose life has not been affected in some essential way by Gandhi. This is so because no other public figure of our era so clearly understood, or so confidently welcomed, the implications of the revolutionary age in which we live.

Among all the revolutionaries who have dominated the political stage in our century—Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mao—Gandhi alone offered the prospect of reform without destruction. While his revolutionary contemporaries were feeding the flames of pernicious chaos, he saw in the innate dignity of the individual human being, no matter how humble or downtrodden, the key to orderly political and social progress.

As I see it, there are three distinct revolutionary currents in which Gandhi's practical, earthy ability to apply to new situations what he called "the universal truths" has been instrumental in shaping the history of our times and in moving all of mankind towards a more rational existence.

In each of these three areas no scientist, no statesman, no educator has contributed so much as did the humble Indian lawyer who for nearly fifty years carried a torch for the oppressed peoples of all nations, all races and all creeds. The first of these is the anti-colonial revolution; the second, the revolution for human dignity; and the third, the revolution for peace.

The anti-colonial revolution

Let us first consider Gandhi's influence on the unprecedented anticolonial revolution which since World War II has freed more than a billion Asians and Africans from foreign rule.

Gandhi was born just six months before Lenin and within two years of Sun Yat-Sen, and his career paralleled theirs in

many respects. Lenin, too, was a lawyer, who was to spend years in prison for violating the laws of Czarist Russia. Each of the three was to live and work abroad during his most formative years, and each was to respond in his own way to the powerful revolutionary forces which were generated by the industrial revolution. While Lenin in Russia was encouraging the abortive armed uprising of 1905 and Sun Yat-Sen was organizing the Secret Chinese Revolutionaries League, Gandhi, in race-conscious South Africa, was conducting his first great so-called "experiment with Truth".

When we consider the deeply rooted economic misery and personal humiliation that afflicted millions of Indians both in India and in South Africa in the first decades of the twentieth century, any deeply committed revolutionary might have been tempted to choose the path of violence. Gandhi, however, adopted as his what he described as the "force which is born of truth", satyagraha. Instead of exploiting the dissatisfactions of an underprivileged people, he sought to give each individual a sense of personal pride which generated not only patience but an invincible inner strength. Instead of seeking the destruction of his enemies he taught his followers gradually to persuade them with love and respect.

Within a single generation, we have witnessed an unprecedented transition from a world of empires to a world of free nations and we have yet to see the end of the struggle. However, a thousand years from now history will record that it was the Indian Independence movement under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi that set the standards by which both colonial powers and subject peoples were compelled to judge their actions.

If the Indian revolution, which was the first and greatest of the anticolonial movements, had been led by angry, embittered leaders in a bloody protest against British rule the history of the last ten years would have been disastrously different. In that event the frustrated peoples of Asia and Africa would almost certainly have embarked on a similar orgy of violence and mass destruction against the colonial regimes under which they lived.

But this crucial moment in history Gandhi demonstrated the effectiveness of the nonviolent way of dealing with oppression and aggression. The result in India was a peaceful transfer of power, the creation of an enduring friendship and respect between the ex-rulers and their ex-subjects, and a politically stable, economically progressive democratic nation. And because elsewhere in Asia and Africa others followed his lead, independence came to all but a handful of ex-colonial countries with a large measure of mutual good will and respect.

The revolution for human dignity

Let us now turn to Gandhi's contribution to the second great revolution for human dignity. In this struggle, to the candle lit by Gandhi in India has grown into a great light which is giving new confidence and strength to oppressed minorities all over the world. Gandhi clearly saw that an India divided by communal bitterness and prejudices could never achieve self-respect and independence. His efforts to provide the Harijans with equal opportunity and a full measure of dignity, and to awaken the social conscience of all castes and religions are in large measure responsible for the present vitality of Indian democracy.

In his role as a protogonist of equal opportunity and human dignity my own country owes a special debt to Gandhi. Some 18 million Negro Americans are now pressing their claims to first class citizenship. These demands include the constitutional right to vote, to be fully educated, to have equal employment opportunities and to receive equal treatment in all public accommodations. And it is the Gandhian ideal and Gandhian action techniques with which they are gradually achieving their objectives.

Gandhi once remarked that "It may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world". Yet only a decade ago, such a development in America appeared remote and unrealistic. For instance, shortly after my return to the United States from my first assignment in India, I spoke at a distinguished Negro college in one of our southern states. In the course of my talk I emphasized that

there was no case in history where one race, however well intentioned, had been able to deliver both freedom and dignity to another. Freedom, I said, must be fought for and won: it can never be achieved without struggle.

I then described the role of Gandhi in leading the fight for Indian freedom and how, through a peaceful but relentless program of action, he and his followers had gradually persuaded the British Raj to grant the Indian people their independence. I concluded my talk with an appeal to the Negro student audience to help develop and support a comparable program of cooperative action directed at achieving the full equality of opportunity which was guaranteed to each of them under the American constitution.

Their response was apathetic. Instead of persuading my Negro audience to protest against their second class citizenship by temperate Gandhian means I sensed that I was only making them feel uncomfortable. At luncheon that day, I asked the President of the college for his explanation. "Very few of our students," he lamented, "have ever felt any personal responsibility for group action designed to secure their rights of citizens and they are hesitant to accept such responsibility even now. With a few militant exceptions their primary hope after graduation is to secure a reasonably good job and to be let alone."

It was against this background of inertia and resignation among many of our Negro citizens that Martin Luther King, a briliant, eloquent young Negro minister who had been deeply influenced by Gandhi, began to spell out a Gandhian course of action in the churches, meeting halls and public squares of our still segregated South. His first success was the organisation of a Negro boycott in Montgomery, Alabama that forced the city government to order the desegregation of the bus system. From this hopeful beginning Dr King, carefully testing his ideas, techniques and organization moved steadily into the leadership of a new massive national civil rights movement which in the last ten yearsh as secured more freedom for Negro Americans than all the laborious and sometimes bloody efforts of the previous century.

The spirit and language with which Dr King lays down the principles of his democratic crusade are pure Gandhian. "The Negro," he says, "must come to the point that he can say to his white brothers: "We will match your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with our soul force. We will not hate you, but we will not obey your evil laws. We will soon wear you down by our own capacity to suffer. So, in winning the victory, we will not only win freedom for ourselves but we will so appeal to your heart and conscience that you will be changed also. Thus over victory will be a double victory: we will defeat the evil system and win the hearts and souls of the perpetrators of that system."

To provide his followers with the necessary strength that comes of confidence and personal dignity, Martin Luther King has borrowed another basic Gandhian concept—self-improvement. Sixty years ago in South Africa, Gandhi admonished his followers: "Let us begin by considering the grievances held against us by the white people. Let us see if the reasons which the whites give for discrimination againt us are justified. Then let us put our own house in order, even now while fighting for our civil rights, even before they grant the reforms we ask, even as poor as we are. We can't blame the whites for all our troubles . . . ."

Similarly throughout America Martin Luther King is now telling his Negro followers, "Let us examine the reasons given by white men for segregation. Let us see which reflect conditions we can do something about, and take action ourselves."

Dr King then goes on to list the high illegitimacy rate among Negroes, the tendency of many young Negroes towards crime. their frequently low health standards. He emphasizes that these deficiencies must be recognized as the psychological legacy of second-class citizenship—a legacy that must be removed. Like Gandhi he calls upon his followers by their own actions to break the vicious cycle of bigotry, submission and resultant squalor which generations of discrimination have helped to create.

The extraordinary effectiveness of the Gandhian civil rights movement in America is reflected in a steady flow of successes,

some large and others small. In August 1964, Dr King in co-operation with other Negro and white leaders organized the greatest mass demonstration in American history—the so-called March on Washington. From all parts of the country by trains, buses, airplanes and on foot came an estimated 230,000 men and women, Negro and white, rich and poor. With no sign of violence or even bitterness they marched peacefully through the streets of the nation's capital arm-in-arm, singing the deeply moving song of the American Civil Rights revolution, "We Shall Overcome".

Early this year there was another peaceful march on the segregationist stronghold of Montgomery, Alabama, where Dr King began his crusade. And now each night on their television sets tens of millions of Americans watch and applaud the progress of the massive voter registration drive in which Negroes are qualified as voters, the "sit ins" and the "kneel ins", and the long lines of courteous but determined Negroes waiting patiently to be served at segregated lunch counters.

As in India twenty or thirty years ago, a minority of impatient Negro leaders who doubt the effectiveness of nonviolent action, have organized militant action groups. But it is Dr King's Gandhian philosophy that has captured the imagination of an entire generation of Americans and particularly young Americans who are glad to be rid at long last of their prejudices and inhibitions. As we move toward a more perfect realization of the democratic vision of equal opportunity under law there are now few who doubt that Gandhism—American style—is the dominant driving force. When Gandhi suggested many years ago that it may be the Negroes who would deliver "the unadulterated message of nonviolence to the world" he was demonstrating once a gain his extraordinary insight into the mind of man.

The revolution for peace

Let me finally turn to the third revolution of our times where once again Gandhi emerges as a central figure; I refer to the difficult, frustrating struggle for a world of peace and goodwill.

Although the quest for peace among nations is as old as mankind we must admit that so far at least it represents one of our least successful efforts. Yet, is there not the basis for a new hope, however fragile, that may gradually be taking hold of us all ?

On the eve of World War II, Gandhi wrote: "If the mad race for armaments continues it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious." The war which Gandhi foresaw came in due course bringing with it the death of some 40 million men, women and children and the development of nuclear weapons which in a future conflict could increase the toll ten times over.

But may not our fantastic new technology also be the instrument that leads us to salvation? First, the very knowledge that aggression may lead to mass destruction of both aggressor and the victim on an unprecedented scale has a sobering effect on even the most irresponsible of national leaders. Second, the development of radio, television, communications satellites and supersonic transportation now enables people of different nationalities to see how others think and live. Tourism and student exchanges are helping to reinforce these gradually growing bonds. It is now increasingly possible that average Americans, average Indians, average Russians and some day, let us hope, even average Chinese may come to see their common stake in development, in understanding, and in peace?

To be sure it is still true, as Gandhi once observed, that "machineries of government stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another". Yet in today's world no political leader however irresponsible can toy with the idea of mass warfare without taking into account the interests of the hundreds of millions whose forebears were so voicelessly slaughtered in past wars.

In this context I believe that Gandhi's message to the world is of particular importance. It was Gandhi who refreshed the centuries-old concepts of brotherly love and tolerance and gave them meaning in the political framework of the twentieth

century. By thus giving voice at long last to the humble masses of the world is it not possible that he may have liberated the greatest force for peace? Indeed was it not the spirit of Gandhi which guided the hands of those who provided the mighty vision of the United Nations Charter and who later signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in Moscow?

In mourning the death of Gandhi, General MacArthur summed up the essence of his contribution. "In the evalution of civilization, if it is to survive, all men cannot fail eventually to adopt Gandhi's belief that the process of mass application of force to resolve contentious issues is fundamentally not only wrong but contains within itself the germs of self destruction."

In conclusion let me briefly sum up the reasons why I believe Gandhi's influence on our times surpasses that of any other individual. We may start with the fact that his philosophy was based on the eternal aspirations of all men for a free and harmonious life. The universality of his ideas is underscored by the following bit of history.

In the 1820s an English translation of the Upanishads found its way into the Harvard Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where it was read by a young American writer, Henry David Thoreau. In it he found a concept of human dignity and endeavour that he gradually evolved into a theory of nonviolent social and political action.

In the 1850s Thoreau, who demonstrated his own belief in his own doctrine by going to jail in protest against what he considered an unjust law, spelled out his new concept in a pamphlet which he entitled "Civil Disobedience". Eventually this pamphlet found its way into the hands of Leo Tolstoy in Russia who sent a copy to Mr. Gandhi in South Africa.

From Thoreau's presentation, from the writings of Tolstoy and others and from his own so-called "experiments with truth" Gandhi conceived the grand strategy of nonviolent action which ultimately freed India and many other countries as well.

From South Africa by way of India these dynamic ideas found their way sixty years later to America where under the guidance of Martin Luther King they have become the driving force of

our present great Civil Rights Revolution for individual dignity. And so we see, as Gandhi knew so well, how mankind is bound together by invisible ties of conscience and vision.

Equally important, however, was Gandhi's belief that these eternal aspirations could be realized. "I positively refuse," he said, "to judge man from the scanty material furnished to us by history."

Finally there was his practical capacity to pursue his beliefs in a down-to-earth way, proving his own observation that "a small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history".

Of the three revolutions which I have discussed—the revolution against colonialism, the revolution for human dignity and the revolution for peace—none is complete and the road ahead is strewn with difficulties. Yet because Gandhi showed tens of millions of individual citizens how to speak out for freedom, for peace and for individual dignity, I believe that mankind is on the right path and that our task is an easier one.

Gandhi the Leader

PEARL S. BUCK

The atomic bomb has already become significant to us not primarily as a weapon any more but as the blast which announced the end of one age and the arrival of another. On that day in August 1945, when we heard that a small silvery object falling out of the sky had killed a hundred thousand people in a matter of seconds, we could only think of it as a weapon. Silence fell upon the world, the silence of shock and horror. Now, a few years later, while shock and horror remain, we see more than that. We see a future different from any past that the human race has ever known. We are already living in a present different from any that we have ever known. Our bodies, encased in the shell of a jet plane, can be carried in a matter of hours to and from the remostest parts of the earth. Breakfast in New York brings us to luncheon in London. New Delhi is next door and South Africa just over the horizon.

We know this, but our comprehension has not been able to keep pace. We are actually still living in yesterday. Our knowledge is incomplete, our perceptions are not swift enough, and our emotions are still unready for the world in which we physically live. The distances today are not geographical, they are cultural and economic. Upon the lightning wings of that jet plane we are catapulted from one cultural and economic level to another, and we find it difficult, if not impossible, to adjust quickly enough to know where we are. Such distances are emphasized because we have no time to prepare for them, geographically. The people of the Chinese mainland, for example, are centuries behind the peoples of Europe and the United States in physical ways. There government is being administered locally today by the sons and daughters of the peasants of yesterday, who could not read and write. These young people, too,

have not had time to be educated even for the present, not to speak of the future pressing so hard upon us all. Though they may have been taught how to read and write in political schools as they have, they have had no time to be educated in the true sense, and yet out of ignorance they are trying to administer government, and I am sure with devotion and consecration, to six hundred million people. A Canadian friend of mine, travelling occasionally back and forth from mainland China, tells me that it is his impression that the whole government is administered by young people between the ages of 17 and 22, a thought which I want to remind you is horrifying. In western terms, these children who are trying to govern are centuries behind. The people of Russia I suppose are less behind in some ways, and in others more, for in China learning was at least revered, and knowledge was respected. Ideologies are not so different as are the cultural and economic levels of these peoples, in comparison to our own. In the rush for modernization in Asia—a perfectly understandable rush—democratic processes may fail, for these processes are too slow when an ill-organized populace must somehow be incorporated into a unified whole, if the nation is to progress in science and industry. And such progress is essential, for a predominantly rural people can no longer survive, it seems, in our modern world.

Inevitably, then, leaders appear in our violent modern world, leaders self-appointed or chosen. With the need for leadership, a leader always appears, and in his person he epitomizes the struggle of his people. He becomes a symbol, and by the power of his influence he shapes the struggle into revolution, violent or nonviolent. He could not become a leader, did not the people ask for leadership. Yet, conversely, were he not a born leader, the need of the people could not make him one. A strange powerful instinct works between leader and people. I have seen this happen again and again in my own lifetime, living as I did through decades of revolution in China—leadership on a local scale or on a national scale. There was a strange relationship, an instinctive one, between leader and people. The people need him and they find him and they shape him to their demand. He

responds, and in turn shapes them to his demand. Once found, the people follow their leader blindly as sheep and sometimes to their mutual destruction, as in the case of Hitler, and others before him and after him. Or they follow, to their success and triumph, as in the case of Gandhi. What makes the Hitler, leading his people to destruction? What makes the Gandhi, leading his people to triumph? The answer lies in the quality of leadership, and the quality of leadership depends upon the quality of the leader. The people are not always wise. They can and often do choose the wrong leader, a man with magnetism, perhaps, but without the principles upon which true leadership depends. It is these principles which I propose to explore here.

And what are the principles of leadership? I venture to say that, first of all, every potential leader is and of necessity must be a dreamer, one who dreams of what should be and could be, if—

A world that could be better, if—
A life that could be fuller, if—
A people who could be happier, if—

Most people do not dream big dreams. They hope, they wish, they have fragments of dreams, a better house, a big car—or a smart small one these days—clothes, food, prestige, business success, travel—these are all good little dreams that have no significance beyond themselves, enough perhaps to induce little dreamers to work harder, earn more, enjoy their individual lives. All good, but these are not the dreams I mean, the big dream, the universal dream of mankind for mankind. The person who can envision the big dream must have the conceptual mind, the synthesizing mind, the creatively thinking mind. Essentially, of course, this is the mind of the artist, living in the eternal search for meaning, for beauty, for order, for understanding, for universal happiness. Essentially, this mind expresses the very nature of the artist, the capacity to feel, the energy to pursue the vision. Instinctively the people, in search of a leader, are drawn to one who is superior to them they think, one who sees beyond what they can see, one who is willing to work for the dream and so for them. He is, above all, able to express

the dream in terms which they can understand, a dream of enough to eat, a steady job, freedom from oppression, freedom to think, to speak, to write—just to be free. He puts into words what people want and in terms simple enough so that they can grasp it and they come to believe that he knows how to make the dream come true. He promises, and they follow.

This capacity for dreaming is an essential part of the leader's nature, it is imagination, it becomes a longing, which grows acute in him when he sees the needs of those who surround him and their dependence upon him, their hope in him. He is under obligation to them to prove himself. He is compelled by his belief in himself and in his dream, and in the power of his own promises. He belives that he can make the dream come true. He is now the chosen one. Will he fulfil the promise and deserve the faith? Let us see; let us proceed.

The next principle I think is that of genius, abetted by talent. It is very easy to dream. In one way or another, as I have said, each of us has his dream. Whether we can fulfil the dream, the extent to which we can fulfil it, determines the quality of leadership. I do not hesitate to attach the word *genius* to this quality. The flair, the vision, the conceptual thought, all are part of genius. You will notice that I also attach the word talent. Genius and talent are two different attributes. Genius is the quality, the principle; talent is the ability to express the genius and to make the application. I think in this regard particularly of Sun Yat-sen of China whose lifetime was partly my lifetime. There is a man who certainly was a dreamer and certainly had the quality of genius in a strange sort of way but had no talent whatever so that he had no means, no technique, to make the dreams come true. He had no ability to work out in practical terms his own hopes. I might say then that genius is art and talent is craft. The difference between art and craft, and the relationship between art and craft is the difference, the relationship, between genius and talent. The potential leader may have genius, but unless he has the talent for its practical expression, he will fail as a leader, and when he fails the people, those whom he has led will either follow other leader-

ship or they become quite ruthless towards the leader who failed. They will not only reject him, they will put him to death because they cannot forgive him. He has betrayed them, not by intention, but by lack of talent. He has been able to conceive, but not to organize. He has promised but he has not produced. One has only to study the history of revolutions in this world to understand the necessity of talent in leadership as well as genius. Rarely if ever has the first revolutionary leader remained free and alive. Others of little genius but more talent take over.

Mahatma Gandhi, in contrast, I think, to Sun Yat-sen, had the same genius but he had also a remarkable talent for its practical application. He was a politician and social craftsman as well as a genius. His dreams were solid, anchored firmly to the needs of his people. His concepts were not only of a Utopia, but also of how to achieve it. He knew his people. He knew what they were able to understand and what they were able to do, and he led them only as fast as they could go—but as fast and in ways that they understood. How much laughter there was in high places when he talked of salt and of the spinning wheel and of nonviolence! But these were the ideas which his people, the simplest of them, could grasp. Salt was a daily need, the spinning wheel gave them a symbolic freedom from the machines of empire, and nonviolence was part of their ancient religion. Gandhi would have failed completely had he not used such means. The people understood what to do when he told them, and therefore they could take their part in bringing the dream to reality. Through action suited to their understanding they were able to see the dream more clearly. The dream itself would have faded had Gandhi been less skilled as a craftsman in his leadership. Had he talked only of the dream without telling people what to do about it, he would have failed as their leader. He did not fail. He never failed his people, for what he asked of them he first did himself. He practised what he told them to practise. And all the time he maintained the dream. He knew what he was working for. He never lost that vision, the end to which all else was the means.

Genius and talent, in the simplest terms that I have tried to

express them—and this brings me to the next principle, integrity. There is a difference, you know, between honesty and integrity. People can be quite honest but not have integrity. Honesty is being honest, and telling the truth to the best of your ability, being fair and so on, but integrity is being honest when no one can know about it.Integrity is honesty carried through the fibers of the being and the whole mind, into thought as well as into action so that the person is complete in honesty. That kind of integrity I put above all else as an essential of leadership. There are, as you know, good and honest persons of the utmost integrity who nevertheless cannot be leaders because they have not the qualities of conceptual thought, which I call vision, and who possess no genius and talent. But genius and talent without integrity are not enough. Integrity is the soul of leadership.

I cannot, however, put one quality above another in this matter of the principles of leadership. They are equally important. Without each the whole cannot be achieved and all must be found in the same person before we have the potential leadership which we need.

What is integrity again? It is loyalty in triplicate—loyalty to the dream, loyalty to one's best self and the best one knows, and loyalty to the people one serves. A clear and simple example of integrity might be Gandhi's visit to England at the height of his career, before his success was assured. He was already successful in his own country but whether his leadership would be recognized abroad was as yet unknown. You will remember that notable visit, how he arrived in London wearing his costume of homespun cotton, and although the weather was grey and chill, his only wrap was his handwoven woollen shawl. He fed on goat's milk, and he slept on a mat. Among the dignified and amply dressed Englishmen he seemed an odd figure and there was much laughter and many cartoons blossomed on the pages of magazines and newspapers. But Gandhi was unmoved by laughter and criticism. He knew what he was doing. I do not doubt that he had thought out carefully every step of his way, how he would dress, how he would behave. His talent was at work. Of course, he could have worn English formal dress with the best of

them, but had he done so, his people would have doubted him. They would have feared that he was yielding to the British in some secret way of which perhaps he might scarcely be aware. He had to identify himself with those whom he served. He would eat no better food, wear no better or different garments from those he and his followers had worn in India. He dramatized millions of Indian peasants in his own small rather insignificant person but he did this not only for the sake of drama. Drama alone would not have served. But I am sure that had he gone to England dressed otherwise we would not have seen the India that he wanted us to see. He did it first I believe for integrity's sake. This is I, he said in effect, and in this man whom you behold, you see millions of other men, my people, of whom I am only one. When the people of India studied his photograph in their newspapers they did not laugh or make fun. You may be sure their devotion swelled to greater heights than ever before. This man was their man, he had given himself to them. He did not betray them when he went to rich foreign countries. He walked the handsome streets of London looking exactly as he did on the dusty roads of the Indian countryside. They recognized him as theirs, though he was thousands of miles away. He was always the same. They trusted him.

"Truth", Gandhi once said, "is not merely a matter of words. It is really a matter of living the truth."

This trust did not come about in an hour or a year. It took years of relentless integrity before Gandhi was trusted completely by his own people and finally by the world. He won this trust not only by his complete honesty in thought and action, but also by a unique frankness. He bared his private life to his people. He described his own struggle with temptation. He told of his own failures, and how when he failed he began all over again, refusing to be discouraged. He was weak as other men are weak and he fought his weakness. His frankness at times was embarrassing. Some called it exhibitionism, but it was not. He was stripping himself naked, so that his people could see him as he was, and seeing him, recognize themselves. And because he had conquered himself, he gave them hope for themselves.

For Gandhi, this integrity meant a self-revelation where there could be nothing secret or hidden in his life and thought. All that he did was open and before the eyes of others. Even the simple rites of eating and sleeping, the habits of work and communication, were there for all to see. Everybody knew everything about him except, perhaps, in his weekly days of silence, when for one day he shut himself away into himself to commune again with his own dream and renew his own vision. On that day he wanted to hear no human voice, not even his own. For the rest, he belonged to the people and they belonged to him.

There were times, of course, when this complete identification, the result of complete integrity, became somewhat irritating. Gandhi could be so identified with people, especially those closest to him, that he took part in their most private affairs and gave advice where it was not always wanted or—let us say—appreciated. His people had to become accustomed to his directions—or advice—in personal matters of marriage, or health habits, or politics, or anything. But I think they forgave him everything because it was love and interest that prompted this help. Nothing was sacred to Gandhi—or rather, everything was sacred, and therefore open to his inspection and participation. When his advice was not followed, or when he was opposed he had the annoying habit of immediately punishing himself instead of the other person. There is, of course, no more subtle revenge than the direction of Jesus when he advised his followers to turn the other cheek when struck—a concept, by the way, to be found in Hindu scripture, in a poem which says, "To give a drink of water in return for a drink of water is nothing. To do something one must return good for evil."

Any act more disconcerting to the enemy could scarcely be devised than the turning of the cheek. Just what does one do when the other cheek is offered? The most callous conscience must be pricked or at least confused, or even angered by such a retort. Come on, the saint says gently, hit me again if you are wicked enough. To hit again is to acknowledge the wickedness and extend it to proof beyond dispute. Also—what is the use

of hitting someone who asks to be hit? Gandhi applied the technique by going on fast and such was his will power that time and again he continued almost until death. Perhaps he was so completely one with his people that he knew nothing could terrify them more than the loss of him, their leader, and, always the recalcitrant one, in triumph he sipped his fruit juice and returned to life. There was a great deal of humour in Gandhi and at times a child-like mischief, which his people perfectly understood and enjoyed. It was Sarojini Naidu, I believe, that woman of wit and intelligence, who loved Gandhi with utter devotion, who said one day something to the effect that it cost the people a great deal to maintain Gandhi in his simple poverty. This, I was told, was her comment upon a visit by Gandhi to one of his millionnaire friends—and he was not proud for he made friends among millionnaires as well as among untouchables—when he insisted upon having the furniture and carpets and decorations removed from a handsome room in the mansion and caused a great deal of trouble so that he could live in his usual poverty and simplicity.

Whatever the humour and the drama of his life, and that is a part of a good leader which he frankly enjoyed, the people enjoyed it, too. They laughed at him, they revered him, they trusted him. And in return he never asked them to do what he knew they could not do, if they were inspired—and he could inspire them. He never asked them to do anything ignoble or dishonest or unworthy of the high cause for which he gave his life. And, I repeat, whatever he asked them to do he did first. When he bade them give up untouchability he adopted as his own daughter a girl belonging to the untouchables. When he gave the name of Harijan, or "God's Own", to the untouchables, he led his people gently towards the green pastures and the still waters of non-segregation. He did not force them beyond their power to perform, but he led them. This is integrity. This is loyalty to the vision. This is loyalty to the highest self. This is loyalty to the highest in people. His own integrity roused in response the integrity of those whom he led. And I assure you this never fails.

Mahatma Gandhi then was a leader who succeeded in bringing about his dream. He fulfilled his vision. Genius and talent combined in him and when he died his revolution was not taken over by lesser men. And there is very important lesson to be learned from that. It is when the leader fails that lesser men take over, but if the leader does not fail, the revolution is not lost. Instead, men like Prime Minister Nehru, who were his followers, took up the challenge of his leadership. Theirs has been a different leadership in method, perhaps, and even in talent, but the genius has been the same. They have not departed personally from the principles that Gandhi established. India, therefore, has not suffered the waste and loss that most countries suffer after revolution. Her progress has been steady. And the greatest tribute of all, perhaps, to the success of that leadership is the fact that the British themselves have acknowledged its quality and now all over the world people are beginning to understand the quality of the leadership that has followed Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi would not allow in himself the luxury of personal enmities. He rebelled steadfastly, of course, against colonialism and lived and died for the freedom of his people. Yet he was warmly friendly towards the individuals who administered that which he wished to put away. Lord and Lady Mountbatten were his personal friends and admirers and the dignity and mutual respect which attended the granting of independence to India was unique in human history. We must attribute this primarily to the noble leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the manner in which he conducted the long struggle.

And I remind you and myself of that, especially at this moment when leadership is developing among the Negroes of the southern United States, and in the whole country in fact—and leadership for many of us who are not Negroes. I think we should remember that dignity and mutual respect with which Britain yielded India. I should like to remind the white people of the South of this way of yielding which brought honour to England and to all Englishmen, Englishwomen, all Britain. The manner in which they yielded won respect and trust. I wish that some of those who have not yet understood how to yield

with honour would remember this great lesson in history.

I pause here for a moment. Among these basic principles of leadership which I have tried to describe to you, I considered adding one more, that of fearlessness. Then I decided against it. For fearlessness is the inevitable fruit of the capacity for the dream, accompanied by genius and practical talent, infused and empowered by integrity. Such a person by consequent nature is inevitably fearless. Certainly Gandhi was fearless, of jail, of ridicule, of poverty, of death itself.

It was strangely fitting that Gandhi should have died suddenly one day at the hand of one of his own people. I am sure we often think of the great drama of that death. It usually happens that a man of such stature approaches heights intolerable to certain lost souls. Christ always has his Judas. The dualism of our universe manifests itself in many ways. Gandhi died while he was triumphant in leadership. He did not sicken and weaken as lesser men might do. He simply was sent on his way to what beyond we do not know. How can one imagine immortality? When I think of the word, immortality, I am reminded of the simple explanation I once heard an American mother give to her child. We cannot know what happens to people after they die, she told the child, because we aren't breathing the same air any more. See that dragon fly younder, on the lake's edge? Once it was a water creature, living under water. Then one day it felt the necessity of going to the surface of the water. It didn't know why it had to go, but it just seemed time to do it. So up it went and, there on the surface, suddenly it found itself changed. It had wings, and it could fly. But it was never able to return again under the water or find the other creatures there, who had not wings yet, and who had to live under the water. And those creatures, I suppose, said to one another, in their way, I wonder where he went, and why we don't see him any more. . . . They think he is lost, the mother said to the child, but he isn't. He's flying on wings in another world.

So, perhaps, we may say of Mahatma Gandhi, in remembrance. He is flying on wings somewhere in another world.

Gandhi and the Modern World—The New Image

AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

From across the waters, the single image of India in myriad minds is that of the modern saint-in-action, Mahatma Gandhi. As unmistakably Indian as the Vedic hymns or the high Himalayas, he yet represents the simplest villager—traditionally kind, hard-working and long-suffering but now touched by a new world dynamism which Gandhi himself brought to his people. When he took to the road, harnessed himself to the service of truth and freedom, India rediscovered its inheritance but also confronted the issues of a larger interdependence. Surprised, the powerful nations saw the power of an irresistible moral personality, owning nothing, unarmed but working through the aroused will of millions. Equally ranged against apathy and discrimination at the home front as he was against exploitation from outside, the intrepid leader gave a new meaning to modern nationalism which needs a wider human context even for its own survival. "The matchless weapon", as he called it, of revolution without violence brought results unparallelled in our age. Austere, tender and accessible to all, Gandhi was spiritually enmeshed in a detailed concern for his fellow-beings; his Truth-force or satyagraha was an enormous readjustive strength which was applied in simultaneous action at basic levels. The freedom movement under his guidance moved into farms and industries, helped in resolving communal and political disputes, and brought a new urgency in planning for health, education and religious enlightenment. Opposing evil at each point he also initiated remedial changes instead of further inflaming and destroying relationships. And yet he carried his burden lightly like an artist-ascetic, with unfailing Aumour anda "spiritual gaiety"

that balanced his severe self-discipline. Africa, Great Britain, then India became conscious of an intriguing figure, till gradually the greater part of mankind knew of a mature, benign leader of history who worked for the larger freedom of which political freedom was a part.

And in a blaze of glory he left, martyred in a prayer meeting, his palms joined in mercy, the name of God on his lips.

Who was Mahatma Gandhi? How can we assess him? He is evidently too near for us to raise our eyes in vertical measurement which, in any case, will be unattainable. As a profoundly religious man, Gandhi was the supreme humanist in the modren crisis. Obviously not a man of science or art in the conventional sense, he used his techniques as precision instruments in what he called "Experiments with Truth", while the relevant purpose, control and design invested his life work with high artistry. To this he added a mystique of faith that took account of the entire human situation. No wonder that a poet like Tagore and a scientist such as Einstein acclaimed his arrival as the great event, that religious men in far removed disciplines felt equally moved by his witness. Hence the further paradox that artists, writers playwrights—and we have mentioned the world of science--were drawn to him from their own constellations to celebrate an alien star whose brightness they recognized. Bernard Shaw, luckily, was known by name to Gandhi, so their encounter did not surprise the Indian saint; but in the case of Charlie Chaplin, Gandhi's completely innocent ignorance all the more endeared him to the great artist comedian. Romain Rolland's chronicle of his discussions with Gandhi in Geneva, and his well-known book, led to a chain of new West-East alignments and loyalities that continues.

Another fact of Gandhi's relationship with creative art should be mentioned. Wherever Gandhi went, song and festival, prayer meetings and Yatras followed him; he could not have endured what he did without his reciprocative joy in this resurgence. He rejoiced in Tagore's poetry; he knew and admired poet Vallathol whose name is now a household word all over India; he warmly recognized the art of Nandalal Bose,

the great painter. Abroad, he marvelled at some of the Western architectural masterpieces, for instance, in the universally beloved London; a city he knew well. His response to music was immediate and profound. Gandhi, as we know, accepted the purest flower of Indian music in Subbulakshmi's songs, songs which have now spread beauty and devotion to far shores beyond India. Bhajans, Christian hymns, chants from the Quran were a part of his daily evening worship. The lonely pilgrim, stick in hand, crossing a frail bamboo bridge in Noakhali had time to halt and listen to Ramlila in a broken village; he delighted in and regenerated rural crafts and regional cultures. One saw him look deeply into the village sky and the riverine scene at sunset as he walked the long stretch. Above all, his eyes would light up at the sight of children, he blessed the homes and families wherever he stopped for a moment of talk or for shelter. Evidently this was a new type of revolutionary leader, strongly modern and yet immediately recognizable as belonging to a more inclusive world history.

Again, do we know Gandhi? Hardly. A man of sorrows who had a word of cheer, who went to flaming villages and put out the fire of hatred, who taught us to love each other as Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others, who mightily fought against drug addiction, priestcraft, landlordism, foreign or indigenous oppression, and yet seemed to be in active rest while the storm raged. Awake at dawn in prayer, hard at work till late hours, leading thousands of people all over the land, this man could laugh at himself as he would laugh at fear or death. Willing to sell his Mahatmaship at an auction sale—that was as much as he cared for this attribution by friends—if he could raise funds for the needy, at home in all religions when the practitioners were good men, yet he belonged to his own particular inheritance of faith which grew with his own experiences. Opposed to machines and mechanizaion he yet stirred villagers towards ceaseless new experiments and broke their fixation to usages they had outlived; he even fell under the lure of electricity in Lyons in France when he saw that new power could be tamed and used by lace-makers in their own

homes instead of the families being uprooted and thrown into ganglionic city slums. Being assured of his complete identification with India he did not idolize India or inculate geolatry which attributed all virtues to one land and excluded it from others. The earth was a fair place for him, where he lived at home, though home for him was where India suffered and strove to recover its life.

What fascinates the contemporary world is the odd combination, the paradox that gave a new twist and turn to whatever Gandhi did in his arduously filled days. His silences, his fasts—mostly a form of vicarious atonement for the crimes done by others—his formidable draughtsmanship of documents. his symbolic and yet active spinning wheel, his meticulous punctuality and patience with human tardiness, all these and more move like a kaleidoscope, leisurely but with an impending urgency. In the midst of disastrous happenings you see him on a morning walk, noting every critical detail and yet a gentleman who bowed and delightly handed over a flower to a walking companion when some villager brought his gift; the joy was shared at once. The man who knew many deaths brought enhanced life to those who may merely have crossed his path.

Some biographers and friends, more unconventional than others, have shattered the stereotype of a Gandhi who lived in negligent poverty, uncareful as to what he ate or wore. There the scientist comes in as well as the art-lover in Gandhi's contrary make-up; we see him dressed in immaculate Khadi; cleanliness, he said, actually can cost less than untidiness and is inseparable from a spiritually informed life. His room was spotlessly tidy, so were his articles of daily use; his meagre but dainty food, whether it was dates or milk or oranges which he loved, show a side of his humanness which cannot be "holified" out of existence. Yet he was not attached to these, or obsessed; he soon forgot whether he was riding a third class in the train or was a guest in a palace room, he was immersed in work and thought. To forget that he was a Karma Yogi is to miss him entirely; incessant work was his rest. The magnanimity of Gandhi's character, the ampleness and the

intensity which he brought to bear on minutely careful responsibilities need an artist, a chronicler, and a religiously attuned personality so that we can see his image mirrored. But no one category will fit him; he was on the Bhakti Marga, and worship was his transcending daily need. We understand why in his favourite scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the paths to the divine are not mutually exclusive; we see one or the other predominate but also harmonised in the Gandhi Yoga. The whole of his life, though so seemingly diverse, found its unitive resources at a level which can never be made explicit.

Where Gandhi failed was in his refusal to be a spiritual or political dictator. But this failure was his greatest victory. His rejection of superhumanship was the seal of his authenticity. People who have extraordinary powers do no claim to be extraordinary; they are naturally so. We are speaking here of men of genius in the normal vocations of life, not of God's chosen few who transcend most of our categories. Here his life was in precise opposition to evil leaders like Napoleon, not to mention modern counterparts, who desecrate history as much as they poison personal relationships by their obviously motivated stance of beyond-good-and-evil manliness. Destiny, in that sense, did not choose Gandhi as its instrument; neither did he choose destiny. Aggression or outrage, therefore, was not his repertoire, nor did he use devastating cunning. Not death marches, but "peace marches", the movement towards light and liberation was the Gandhian way. Prestige meant less to him than the least he could do for others; if he was a leader, he led from within; preferably he would be with the so-called common man in the privileged sharing of authority. Obviously he did not burn a city to prove his prowess or attack a country in order to add a new feather to his cap. In an epoch of still unvanished dictators it is important to find where true power resides, and to point out that ruthlessness roots out success.

Reference has been made to humanism as an expression of the spirit, but "spiritual humanism", if such a terms is valid, needs; more than a combination of science and the artistry of faith.

Clearly in Gandhi's case, the sanction lies deeper. I have referred to his devotional and actional faith, but metaphysically, as he has said, he was an Advaitist. His values led him to the source of all values just as his religion took him to the source of all religions. Hence the service of the One and responsibilities for the many never caused for him a split or a tear either in theory or in consciousness.

A political leader who considered politics to be one more field for Truth; a reconciler who never bargained with facts; this person has India's choice. Somehow Gandhi fitted India's image of itself. India, like other nations and countries, has often failed, we have identified weakness as the courage of compassion, we have ritualised ourselves into patterns of fear and dependence. And yet we had Gandhi. He was a difficult leader, for he walked the hard road and made us walk it. Now we have to walk further along.

When Gandhi returned to India, he put his life-affirmation to a further test in a profounder and more widely extensive field of applied spiritual ethics and in opposition to war than is known to mankind. He had come closer to Judaism and Christianity in Africa than in the West; Islamic freedom from colour and caste prejudice, among other contributions, has also been for him a heartening challenge. Now to the India of Tulsidas, Kabir and Nanak he came back with a clearer conception of his task. Recognizing the summit of metaphysical and spiritual insight in the Upanishads and *Gita* he also felt the intellectual and moral power of the mainstream which had produced the Buddhist enlightenment and the nineteenth century emergence of Swami Vivekananda. Soon after his return to India he met Tagore; for as it happened, Tegore's Ashram in Santiniketan provided his family and friends with their first home after the long absence in Africa; he himshlf joined later. The personal friendship formed between the poet and the new maker of India never waned. Tagor, evidently, gave him an added horizen and a sense of India's extended responsibilities in the modern world, while in Gandhi the poet saw the embodiment of India's highest ideal of the worker, the saint, and the

patriot. History may reveal, or it may not, how these two lofty men, different in the urgencies of their work and outlook, and therefore needfully supplemental, brought India towards its creative and many-sided freedom.

Another break-through. Opposed as he was to the moral disorder and insanity of war Gandhi had to face the nuclear menace which starting from the last world war has steadily darkened the world. As a member of the wide 'fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain' (in Schweitzer's words) he was, of course, shocked and agonized by this new betrayal. But the abuse of nature did not make him distrust nature or disbelieve in man. With an amazing renewal of strength he experimented on the power of the individual, of the group, of large communities, in transforming the energy and resistance of evil to a higher access. The energy of latent goodness, more powerful than an atom, could be released. In such an attempt a hundred Gandhis might fail but Truth did not fail, for Truth was God. The organized approach, the technique of individual action and moral attraction demanded a wider and an intenser application; the further dimensions of the use of Truth-force, or satyagraha had to be explored. These trails and achievements were Gandhi's gift to the atomic age.

Countries distant from India, wherever the field is ready or rather where there are workers in the field, have been influenced by the Gandhian approach to the spiritual and practical fusion. Serious studies in Group Dynamics, group and individual action-therapy are being pursued in great institutions abroad; the Gandhian quantum which stimulates higher loyalties and cohesion rather than spread negative crowd-infection has stimulated new sociological and applicational research. Peacemarches, controlled by moral leadership as in the case of Martin Luther King, have not only swollen in number but acquired great significance in their effect on regional or national situations. The repercussions, for instance, of the recent peace demonstration in Washington, D.C. were not restricted to one great nation but affected people everywhere with wonder and hope. Evil can be fought with other weapons than evil. And yet, though perhaps

with a slight break, the huge menace is there. So long as people recognize the danger more clearly and consider it necessary to provide food, health and education and raise human standards as an essential religion, the power of resistance grows. Issues are being directly faced by many nations, large and small, in the world's finest single organization, the still tragically under-represented United Nations. India, where Gandhi made his supreme effort, is expected to use its full opportunity, though truth knows no geographical fixation. The Gandhian march is on.

Gandhi's Way of Life

MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Gandhi had a unique approach to life, a conviction which grew in intensity throughout his action-studded life. This was not a matter of mere intellectual speculation or a vision born of fertile imagination. Towards life and its problems, his attitude was not academic nor was his interest merely intellectual. He was essentially a man of action; and even his action was eminently practical and efficient, for it was related to the mainspring of life.

In the light of his faith, whatever appeared to him as truth, he translated it into action and through such life-experience alone did he try to discover life and its meaning. These discoveries again became a part of his being. Understanding of life, for him, was not a matter of mere intellect; such understanding had to come through integrated action. For him life was a laboratory for the discovery of truth through action. That is why, as we all know, he called his autobiography 'My Experiments with Truth'. I recall his having said once: 'Of what use is even knowledge of the Highest unless it helps in purifying and integrating our life, life's relationships, our thoughts and actions?' There can be no knowledge or intelligence apart from action; knowledge divorced from action is just purposeless intellectual sport; intelligence and knowledge are indissolubly linked with action as body is to the spirit. Such was his approach to life.

He lived his life in the light of this perspective and hence it would be more appropriate to look upon this perspective, this vision, as his way of life rather than as his life's philosophy. Gandhi used to say quite often: 'I have not discovered any new principle or philosophy. All that can be claimed is that with all humility I have tried to discover a practical way or path of

translating the ancient and eternal verities—as firm and unshakable as the Himalayas—into action in our daily existence.'

Gandhi inquired into and pondered over the principles which should govern the Indian social as well as individual life and its many facets and parts, by unremitting pursuit of these principles in his own life; and it was thus that the truth of these principles was tested at each stage through integrated action. His way of life thus was essentially the search through action of life and its meaning—of truth. He cultivated, as a result, unwavering and unique devotion to truth.

His search was peculiar inasmuch as it was related to the actual facts of human life in the present; and it was for this modern life that he provided a course of action that was idealistic but at the same time severely practical and efficient. Unlike the traditional Hindu search for individual liberation, it was not self-centred nor was it aimed at mere personal salvation.

He did not think of the individual in isolation from society; his conception of life was such as to encompass the total life process, the many facets and parts of social life (of which politics is also an integral part), and his path of action was such as to enable one to live such a life fully and richly. He did not divide life into compartments. The notion, 'Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's', was not acceptable to him. He did not approve of one set of principles for presonal life and quite another for social life. Truth is the principle which supports and governs—is actually implicit and inherent in—the total life process and its discovery is possible only through love, nonviolence—such was his philosophy of life or his conviction: in brief, such was the mainspring of his life. His uniqueness lay in his determination to follow at any cost the path of action which appeared to him to lead to the realisation in the totality of his life of this basic conviction. This personality trait, this integrated action—this was the characteristic feature of Gandhi's character. It is the main purpose and attempt of this little book to show with the utmost brevity how this personality trait integrated his amazingly varied and eventful life and made it all of a piece.

Gandhi's immortal legacy: his written word

Gandhi has said: 'Simply because I am considered to be a mahatma nobody should take my word as gospel truth. We even do not know who is a mahatma. The best course is to test with reason even the words of a mahatma and to ignore them if they do not pass this test. Blind faith in the words of mahatmas signifies mental lethargy.'

At present, whenever there is any intricate discussion about one problem or the other, a number of people raise the question: 'If Gandhi had been here, what would he have thought or done?' This question is different from the other: 'What did Gandhi say?' And hence the answer is easy and obvious: 'Had he been alive, this question would not have arisen'.

Gandhi's personality was unique. Only he could indicate what he would say or do with regard to a specific problem or a situation; none else can predict. He was a man with such rare original understanding and distinctive personality. That is why he could give new form and meaning to truths as ancient as the Himalayas; for this, he became famous the world over; and everybody is anxious and eager to meditate on his teachings.

Today he is not with us in his mortal frame. Still if somebody—even his most intimate associate—tried to imagine what his response would have been, had he been alive, to a given problem or a situation, the answer would invariably reflect the person's own imagination or thought. And he would not or could not have the audacity to attribute that to Gandhi.

Yet, such a question does occasionally arise in the public mind. Gandhi himself once did write about the respect and faith of the public mind in his wisdom; of course, the context was different. He wrote to the Manager of the Satyagraha Ashram in a letter dated 8 May 1929: 'Each one should live and shape his life according to his capacity. Do only that which is possible and, acting thus, whatever state you attain would be the best. Whatever thoughts you would think in my absence are likely to be more independent.'

So much with regard to independent thinking and action consistent with such thinking. Then he went a little further—

and this is very relevant in the present context. 'For the present, the thought, "What would Bapu wish or think?" would continue to possess you.' Alas, the situation is such that even after his death, some continue to ask the same question.

Does this, then, mean that one who thinks independently should not even consult Gandhi? Should he not meditate on what he said? Even to such a question he himself has provided the answer. He wrote in a letter to Chhaganlal Joshi from the Yeravada prison:

'Quite often our minds are empty of any thought and we like to drown this emptiness in reading or discussion. Some of us do think but that too is more like building castles in the air. Just as there is an art of reading, so also there is an art of thinking. Right thought should occur at the right time. Just as one should not read trash, one should also not indulge in meaningless thoughts. Energy which is generated and conserved by acting thus cannot be measured. . . .

'So my advice to all of you is: Learn the art of deep thinking and if you would do that, hardly any occasion would arise for consulting me. However, let no one misinterpret this. I am not preventing you fromc onsulting me; what I want to avoid is dependence on others. Of course I am there and there are things about which I may have thought more deeply or acquired wider experience and if you think these would be of some help to you, it is not only your privilege but also your duty to consult me.'

This statement is very helpful and meaningful in the context of our present discussion: one can get a sort of a general answer to our main query. And this answer is: we should cultivate the art of effective independent thinking and avoid dependence on others. Simultaneously, Gandhi also desired: 'As long as I am there, let all of you derive whatever help you can from my thought and experience'. But now he is no longer there in his mortal frame and it is not possible to consult him personally. However, he has left behind his thoughts and experiences—let us say his 'experiments with truth'—and all of us can and should consult wisely this intangible self of Gandhi. Without being

dependent on others, let us by all means obtain whatever help we can from the thoughts and experiences of all sages like him. The inheritance in the form of literary treasure has been made possible for man after the discovery of the art of writing and the value of this inheritance cannot be measured in any scale.

Yet, even to understand properly and use wisely this inheritance is itself an art as well as a responsibility. It is quite likely that there may just be ignorance or incomplete or immature understanding of what Gandhi said or wrote; again, the intended meaning of words may not be caught and misunderstanding may arise. Such a state of affairs is likely to lead to controversy with regard to the proper interpretation and intended meaning of words as has happened the world over with the holy scriptures. And for a sage—a universally recognised man of wisdom—like Gandhi, such a thing is particularly likely to happen.

Further, even in Gandhi's own writings, there would be at least some inconsistencise, if not actual contradictions. Some thinkers are already pointing out such inconsistencies. It would be necessary, on such occasions, to peruse his writings with some care to find out what Gandhi really meant. His being not with us prevents us from ascertaining his true position directly.

He himself had cautioned us about the approach to his writings as early as 1933 when such a problem had arisen and it is worth recalling this caution particularly at this juncture. He said then:

'To a diligent student of my writings and to those who are interested in them, I do want to point out that I hardly care for appearing to be the same at all times. I have given up many cherished thoughts and have learnt a number of new things. I have grown in age but I do not think my spiritual evolution has ended or is likely to end even after my death. I am concerned about only one thing. I am determined to follow each moment of my life the dictates of satya-narayana (truth). . . . Hence whoever finds inconsistency as between my two writings should consider the later of the two to be authentic if he has

any faith in my wisdom.'

Gandhi has written extensively and on an endless variety of subjects. The Indian Government is collecting his writings and has already started publishing them. His writings are so extensive as to require more than hundred volumes.

For Gandhi, truth had to be discovered through intense living; he therefore believed that no aspect of life could be considered to be of low or negligible significance for experiments with truth. His writings, therefore, relate to an endless variety of subjects. To summarise them is as impossible as to try to contain the ocean in an earthen pot.

Gandhi's dominant personality trait

Gandhi was not a mere writer, thinker or philosopher in the conventional sense. Of course, he has written profusely, presented many an original thought to the world and discovered, through experiments, laws of life which could serve as a basis for a new and original social and politico-economic philosophy. However, his claim was different. He considered himself to be a practical idealist: 'I care for only one thing in life and that is about my passion for following the dictates of satyanarayana.' Right from his childhood his ideal had been to become a votary of truth in life; and later on, through its application to the varied actual problems of everyday life he demonstrated how eminently practical this ideal was.

The story of this mission he termed 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'; for, in the search for truth, his approach was utterly scientific. 'Though a scientist makes his experiments with extreme thought, precision and care, he does not regard their results as final and remains neutral, if not sceptical, about the validity of his results. Such is also my attitude and approach with regard to my experiments.'

He has also put the same thought in metaphysical terms. 'What I want to attain, and for which I have been aspiring for last thirty years [written in 1926] is self-realisation—liberation. The whole of my activity is directed to that end. My writings are to that end. And my involvement in politics is also on that

count.' By replacing the word God for the inner-self, he also termed this aspiration for self-realisation as aspiration for the realisation of God and defined the word God accordingly:

'The definitions of God are countless as are his manifestations. . . . But I am a devotee only of God as truth. He alone is true, while all else is illusion. . . .' 'To me truth alone is supreme and its meaning is quite comprehensive. This truth is not merely truthfulness in speech; it is truth in both speech and thought. It is not merely what we imagine to be truth: it is self-supporting, everlasting truth, that is, God Himself.'

From ancient times, it was in this broad perspective that truth was regarded in India. In the mediaeval period, this perspective was lost and Gandhi revived in our age this ancient discovery:

satyamevesvaro loke satye dharmah sadashritah
satya-mulani sarvani satyannasti param padam[2]

'Truth alone is God; it is the pivot of dharma; it is the basis of all that exists; there is nothing beyond truth to be discovered.'

And such was his perspective with regard to religion also. After several centuries since the ancient ages, this liberal approach to religion is found for the first time in Gandhi: 'That which is the essence of all religions known by different names and through which all of them are recognised to be one and the same is the supreme dharma.' 'The religious attitude means faith in God—that is, to be guided in all our thoughts and actions by this faith.' And it is for such religion that the Gita makes that astounding and audacious claim:

nehabhikrama-nasho'sti pratyavayo na vidyate
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat[3]

'This is such a religion that whatever is done in accordance with it never gets destroyed. There is no untoward result. Even a small beginning in this direction promotes freedom from the greatest fear.'

Truth always triumphs—it alone triumphs and nothing else can. In the same way, the pursuit of this religion of truth can

2. *Ramayana*, Ayodhya-kanda.
3. *Bhagavad-gita*, 2.40.

never be fruitless. This religion should have its basis in truth and its principal tenet should be non-attachment.

Thus Gandhi expressed our deepest feelings about soul or innermost being, God and religion through the word truth. And from this follows his view of ethics or good behaviour. 'In my experiments, what is metaphysical is ethical; religion is ethics; ethical behaviour in the light of the goal of self-realisation is religion.'

The origin of ethical or good behaviour is in truth: at any rate, it should be so. Only then could it become a universal ethical code for man. This was the approach of Gandhi to ethics. The same principle is beautifully expressed in Hindu philosophy in the word 'sat'; for this one word expresses both the feelings—the feeling of 'truth' as well as the feeling of 'good'. The *Gita* conveys this approach in the following verse:

sadbhave sadhubhave ca sad ityetat prayujyate
prashaste karmani tatha sach-chhabdah partha yujyate[4]

'The word "sat" or truth or that which exists is used to convey "truth" as well as "good"; and Partha, this also connotes good deeds.'

What then is truth?

Gandhi's conception of truth raises one problem as would be obvious to the reader. Gandhi claimed that 'I am in search of truth'; then what was it that he was actually practising? If that also was truth, then what was it that he was in search of? If truth is still to be discovered, how can it be actually practised? How then should one regard truth in actual day-to-day behaviour?—how should one shape one's life? If one has to practise that which is yet to be discovered, how is it possible ?

If one wants to lead a truthful life, one is bound to be faced with this dilemma, this problem of right path or behaviour.

Based on such logic, the Roman judge Pilate had posed that well-known question to Jesus Christ: 'What is truth?' At present communism raises similar controversial questions. Scepticism

4. *Ibid.*, 17.26.

based on such lack of faith in God or truth also represents similar age-old reasoning.

This question has been discussed in countless books on rational philosophy. Still the question presists in its original form. The reason simply is that this problem is incapable of being solved through intellect or reason; it can only be solved by each person directly through actual intense living in search of truth. But the implications and the true meaning of this problem have to be understood. There may not be any dispute about the precept that one must be truthful in thought, word and deed. But there does remain the practical question: how to find out, in each instance and at all times, what is true?

The problem relates to the practice of truth in life. And from that point of view, it is as ancient and everlasting as the existence of man. Gandhi's suggested solution shows the extent to which he was a 'practical idealist', a supreme satyagrahi or seeker after truth. And this solution was the basic principle governing his life and action. He was never tired of repeating it quite often and in myriad ways:

'Truth alone is and all else is illusion. I have not discovered this truth, but I am its seeker. . . . Till I discover this truth, I lead my life in the light of that imaginary truth—I regard it as my lighthouse—that which appears to my innermost being as truth.' Hence, from ancient, times, it is proclaimed that apart from truth, there is no other religion, there is no other supreme end:

satyannasti paro dharmah; satyannasti param padam

This broad principle can be regarded as the code of conduct for a life dedicated to the search of truth as was Gandhi's. He believed with conviction that 'at whatever time, whatever appeals to a pure heart is truth'. According to the author of the *Mahabharata*, in the innermost depth of one's being is the seat of the God of truth (satya-narayana):

dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam

Ultimately that is the supreme test. Each person has to consult Him finally with humility and with prayer. That is his authentic guide.

Does this sound completely arbitrary and confusing? No, it is not so; in fact, this is the only possible course open to a human being, as Gandhi showed through his life. This truly represents the meaning of individual freedom: it is not possible for man to realise the basic purpose of human life in any other way. It is worth pondering over what Gandhi wrote in this connection:

'This path is as difficult as a razor's edge but to me it has appeared to be the smoothest. While on this path, I have considered as mere trifles even my most terrible errors. For, despite these errors, I have been saved and have grown according to my understanding. I have been having even a glimpse of pure truth of God, though from a vast distance. My faith that truth alone is and there is nothing else in this universe has been strengthening as days and years roll on.'

Yet, he used to say: 'I do not intend any time to claim that the results of treading this path are the ultimate truths for all, that they are true or that they are the only true results possible. Yes, I do claim one thing and that is that they are right from my point of view and appear to me to be more or less the ultimate result at the moment. If I do not so regard them, I should not base any action on them.'

This experimental approach to truth is truly the essence of the search for truth.

Quite early in life, Gandhi realised that this path of devotion or dedication to God as truth is the path of constant suffering and sacrifice; it is as difficult as walking on a razor's edge. He has made explicit statements to this effect. In his childhood he saw a play relating to truthful Harishchandra and heard stories of the severe tests through which that supreme devotee, Prahlada, passed; these instances he got from the ancient Hindu religio-historical legends. Later on, in his youth, he came in contact with sincere Christians and through them learnt about truthful Socrates and the story of the crucifixion—that great sacrifice of Jesus Christ; both these stories confirmed his belief in suffering for the realisation of truth. It is again for this reason that this devotional song on Christ's sacrifice used to move him very

deeply:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the Cross of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.
See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!
To Christ, who won for sinners grace,
By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransomed race,
For ever and for ever more.

The truthful way of life demands an unwavering faith in truth. That really means that it should permeate our very being—body, mind and intelligence—and thus lead us to sacrifice the very pleasure principle which has become an integral part of worldly life. This principle governs our bodily existence; truth requires an oblation in the form of sacrifice of the gross elements of the self in the sacrificial fire of the God of truth. This implies severe self-discipline and nonviolence born of understanding and deep goodwill and affection for all creation. That is why, on his truthful way, Gandhi realised that the way to truth was through such nonviolence—demanding utter self-sacrifice. Reminding us of that ancient religious precept, he said: ahimsa paramo dharmah ('nonviolence is the supreme religion'). Yet these ancient teachers hardly showed with such clarity the relationship between nonviolence and truthful living—the link which makes nonviolence the supreme religion as well as the only

effective practical path to truth. Truth is the supreme God and nonviolence is the path. And the meaning of truth each moment and in each field has to be discovered with constant awareness from the actual totality of life. In the light of such discovery, one must base one's behaviour.

In this context, Gandhi used to say briefly to the following effect. 'I do not believe that I have discovered any new truth. But it has been my constant endeavour to follow the two life principles of truth and nonviolence—principles as ancient and immutable as the Himalayas. I examine everything with a pure heart and with humility. Then with proper discrimination, I hold on to the good even at the cost of my life and without causing the least injury to any living being. In this endeavour, I do not allow even my most cherished beliefs or any past accumulation to obstruct my path. In brief, it is the mission of my life to seek truth in this manner and to be prepared to sacrifice even this bodily frame for the sake of this search; in this sense, truth is the mainspring of my life.'

Ethics of life in God as truth

This liberal and practical definition of truth is the unique gift of Gandhi to the art of life or ethics. For such life in truth, he has provided an equally comprehensive principle of conduct.

'Whatever things are related to me, I divide them into two parts: those to be given up and those to be accepted. And I shape my behaviour in the light of the latter. And as long as such behaviour satisfies my intelligence and appeals to my innermost being, I must have an unshakable confidence in the goodness of its results.'

Thus Gandhi does not consider science or religious scriptures or religion as authoritative or as providing a good test with regard to truth or duty (dharma). For him, the only valid test is that of the discriminating intelligence of a man with a pure heart. Even the greatest nationalist or scientist cannot but accept this as completely satisfactory.

Yet, as an individual, Gandhi was not an atheist or a mere rationalist like Bradlaugh, Bright or such other persons. Quite

deliberately he used to call himself a 'Sanatani Hindu'. He aspired to realise God as truth in each moment and each field, however insignificant, of actual life. He believed that it is not possible for man to lead his life by negating his heritage in various fields like economic, social, religious or cultural, that is, by remaining aloof and above the many and varied influences of time and space which shape his mind and existence. Man has to evolve further precisely from the stage at which he finds himself—that is, by understanding his total environment, temperament and personality traits. He can only act thus and he should so act. In the same way, there is an obvious law governing man's movement; he may dance, jump, run or do whatever he likes but can take only one step at a time. Hence, he has to judge each moment, through his complete immersion in that moment, what is the step sanctified by truth that is necessary to meet the immediate challenge of the present. Thus, it is only step by step that one can tread on one's path. This is the law of life in truth: this is its practical principle of conduct.

It was for this reason that that prayer of Newman's ('Lead Kindly Light') impressed Gandhi, It was not merely faith in truth; it was faith in God as truth. And this cannot be negated either by science or rationalism, as truth is also their quest, though they may not regard it as God or consciously or unconsciously regard something else as God.

This prayer by Newman was one of Gandhi's dearest prayers. He had got it translated into Gujarati by the late poet Narsimhrao Divatia and included it in his 'Ashram Bhajanavali'—the collection of devotional songs for his Ashram. This prayer is given below:

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
  Lead thou me on:
The night is dark and I am far from home,
  Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.
I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
  Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.
So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn, those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile.

Gandhi and the Triple Yoga

R. R. DIWAKAR

Gandhi has often been spoken of as a karmayogi. That is perhaps mainly because his karma (action) was far more obvious, vigorous, effective and self-publicising than either the intellectual or the emotional aspects of his life. Another reason is that his action was so comprehensive and extensive and also so important that it touched the life of everyone and filled the whole canvas of Indian affairs, economic, social, political and ethical.

A man's action is always easy to see. It is far more so in the case of one like Gandhi who lived an 'unwalled' existence and for whom secrecy was sin and privacy almost unavailable. Even his bathroom was sometimes invaded and, if not anybody else, the masseur would be there. Millions upon millions saw Gandhi in actual action.

Action is also easily reportable and becomes quickly known. It is recordable and verifiable. This is particularly the case today when mass communication media have developed to vast proportions. Action is also followed by reactions and effects which are tell-tale and often abiding. But what is fundamental in the case of action is that life itself is action and man cares for and takes note of action more than of anything else. Nothing affects man more immediately and effectively than action. A slap in the face is a hundred times more effective than a volume of abuses.

But action has some very grave handicaps as well. One who stops with seeing and understanding the actions of a man and proceeds to judge him on that basis, would be approaching truth only from the periphery and not from the centre. Man's mind and his consciousness are so complex and so profound that a peripheral approach can never be wholly reliable or final. That is why, while law which has to be practical takes note more of

the actual action, ethics has to go deeper and probe into the motives and the general character of the person concerned. The widow's mite is far more valuable than the jewels of vanity-mad persons.

Moreover, man's action, when it is neither mechanical, reflexive, nor instinctive, that is when it is deliberate, conscious and voluntary, is the outcome of a number of processes in the mind. It is here that the intellect, the reasoning powers and the emotional urges of a person come into play. Since all conscious action has thus its origin in the mind and heart of man, since it is the result of the many mental processes, the likes and dislikes, the rational faculty, the whole system of values of the person concerned, how much more must karmayoga depend upon what goes on in the consciousness of the karmayogi? It is obvious that karmayoga, if it is to be really of some value, has to rely on jnanayoga, the yoga of the reasoning faculty, as well as bhaktiyoga, the yoga of the feeling (emotive) faculty.

It has, therefore, to be conceded that while Gandhi can be called a karmayogi predominantly, his karmayoga was based on or rather grounded on the bedrock of jnanayoga and bhaktiyoga. His life and action in their totality bear the indelible and deep marks of the triple yoga, bhakti-jnana-karma. That karma predominated goes without saying, but it is equally true that his faculty of discrimination or reasoning was very powerful and that he had developed it on yogic principles. Similar was the case with his emotive faculty, the faculty of love which is the basic emotion in all bhaktiyoga.

Here the question arises whether it was a composite yoga (yoga-samuchchaya) consisting of karma-bhakti-jnana or whether it was a synthesis (yoga-samanvaya) in the terms used by Sri Aurobindo. In the very nature of things, the triple yoga in the case of Gandhi was a synthesis and not merely a 'samuchchaya' as sometimes Lokamanya Tilak describes it. The reason is obvious. For Gandhi, life was integral and his whole approach to everything in life was integral. This did not mean that he had no sense of discrimination between one value and another. It only means that while he had the most developed

sense of discrimination as regards the comparative value of things, their essential totality was ever present to him. He had the power to concentrate on the immediate task in hand to such an extent that for the time being nothing else mattered. He did what he did at any particular time with his whole being and was absorbed in it to the brim.

Unfortunately in India as well as abroad, yoga is understood and interpreted in various ways. Sometimes this amounts to misunderstanding. Very few seem to care to understand yoga fully and in all its implications. To some it is only the asanas or physical postures, to some it is the means of acquiring some occult powers or personal magnetism or success in life; others take it to be deep-breathing and mental concentration; some others take it as a discipline which will lead to samadhi or communion. While these are partially and some of them fragmentarily correct, the real essence of yoga escapes all those who have but a nodding acquaintance or take only a partial view of it.

Essentially, and derivatively too, yoga does mean 'communion' from the Sanskrit root 'yuj', to join, to come together. But in the course of ages the connotation of this word, as well as of a few others, such as satya (truth), ahimsa (nonviolence), yajna (sacrifice), has grown so rich that no single expression can convey its full meaning and significance. Yoga has many and varied meanings no doubt, but the meaning in which I am using it in the present context is as follows: Yoga is the science and art of life itself and supplies us with the knowledge as well as the technique for developing and mastering the forces of life in a coordinated way for the grand purpose of evolving an integrated, heightend and harmonious personality of the highest and most perfect stature. The literature on yoga is legion but for general purposes and for our understanding of the essence of yoga, the *Gita* may be said to be adequate. It gives us a fairly comprehensive view of the basic elements of this great science and art of life which developed in India. It is still growing. No science and no art can afford to be stagnant if it wants to live. In fact, stagnation is death and petrification. In modern times, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. R. D. Ranade not

only practised yoga but have tried to explain its significance and some of its aspects. A comprehensive and thoroughly scientific book on yoga in modern phraseology has yet to be written. Gandhi was not so much an exponent or commentator on yoga as a demonstrator in actual life of its great teachings. He was an embodiment of the triple yoga of bhakti-jnana-karma.

Fundamentally speaking, yoga consists in the full scientific study of man and his faculties, physical, vital (prana), mental, moral, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual, engineering them to their highest development and rendering them into instruments for attaining the closest and most intimate communion between the individual self and the universal self. The result is that the fully developed yogi would be able to live a life wholly in tune with the inherent evolutionary urge, conscious and aware all the time of the harmony of life and the ecstasy of fulfilment. He is then in a position to live and act not for himself but entirely for others. Having gained everything as an individual, his whole remaining life would then, in a way, be socialised or universalised. Krishna says in the *Gita*, 'There remains nothing for me to gain and still I act for all, for the universe.' The energies and faculties of the individual have to continue to act till his death for the universal good, though not for any individual gain. Tukaram in an ecstatic mood bursts out, 'What remains of me is for doing good to others.'

Yoga is obviously a general term and several yogas are mentioned in the ancient texts. The names usually indicate the dominant note or the principal faculty emphasised and sought to be made the main instrument for developing the whole personality of the aspirant. In mantra-yoga, for instance, a mantra such as the Pranava or the Gayatri is the chosen text with its full meaning and connotation for concentration. The aspirant seeks thereby to raise his whole being or self to a point where he meets the Universal Being and is in communion. the result is that the individual self is able to link itself up with the universal self and become increasingly the channel for the universal self itself.

The most important and generally known yogas, however, are

hathayoga which involves the physical body and the vital (prania) powers that inspire the body, rajayoga which involves the mental faculties, bhaktiyoga which involves the emotive faculties, jnanayoga which involves the discriminatory faculty and the conscience, and karmayoga which involves the will power and the power of action.

No one should make a mistake of thinking that any of these yogas are either exclusive of the other yogas or faculties or independent of each other. It must always be remembered that all these faculties and powers are but part and parcel of a single human being and that they find their home and coordinated as well as intergrated existence in the individual self which in Vedantic terms is called the jivatma (the self as reflected in the individual self).

I have enumerated above the five most important and well-known yogas. But though the main faculty or faculties involved in each of them are different, their development and acme depends partly on the help and coordination of other faculties also. For instance, though hathayoga is the yoga of the physical body and the vital forces which inform the body, it can neither fully develop nor fulfil itself unless it has also the help, cooperation and coordination of the mental faculties. While each yoga, therefore, is a path by itself leading to perfection, its success depends upon the fullest possible help of the other faculties.

There is one more very important feature which marks the yoga system of man's development and evolution. Though the names and faculties involved in the yogas are different, the process and basic technique to be followed is the same, differing only according to the nature of the faculty or faculties involved. Roughly speaking, five steps may be indicated here: (a) purification, shuddhi-karana (b) control, samyama (c) accumulation of power, shakti-sangraha (d) concentration, ekagrikarana; and finally (e) dedication or complete surrender, samarpana.

The first step in any yoga, namely purification of the faculty or power to be used as an instrument for the attainment of the highest aim of life, is of the utmost importance. In fact, no

practice of yoga is free from danger if one does not start with yama-niyama, which is the general preliminary discipline for all yogas. The first step in each yoga comes only after the practice of yama-niyama and pertains to the particular faculty or faculties concerned. In the case of hathayoga, for instance, after the observance of yama-niyama, the purification of the body and the vital forces (prana-shakti) has to be taken up. The next step is control of the faculties and forces so that they are not dissipated by wasteful or futile activities. It is only thus that the third step, namely, accumulation of forces, can be achieved. The accumulated and controlled forces have then to be concentrated on the object to be achieved. This kind of concentration would be the step preliminary to the final one of total dedication which is to result in communion (samadhi).

This process and step by step technique is common to all the yogas, though the steps need not be strictly in chronological sequence. They may overlap but all steps are essential. That is why yoga is both a science based on the facts and laws of nature and an art based on the techniques for fulfilling the demands of human evolution.

I would not like to burden this article with details. Nor is it necessary to deal with yogas other than those with which we are immediately concerned, namely the bhakti-jnana-karma yogas. But even at the risk of repetition I would lay emphasis on the necessity of purification since Gandhi was never tired of emphasising it. Truth cannot be perceived and experienced except by a mind which is shorn of selfishness, egoism and taint of hatred. Nor can truth be fought for by impure or untruthful means. The highest objectivity for the perception of truth and the greatest purity for a moral and nonviolent fight against evil may be said to be the sine qua non of the Gandhian approach to truth and nonviolence. It is as dangerous to be impure in mind in a moral fight as it is to approach a surgical operation with a rusted knife. Gandhi's relenting after the Rajkot fast is an illustration in point.

In the first place I would say that Gandhi was a disciplined yogi. There are people who are born with occult powers, or

natural powers of extraordinary concentration, and who can easily enjoy communion or samadhi. As a result, they attain great heights and develop a spiritual capacity. But Gandhi was not born with any natural capacity.

In calling him a yogi what I mean is, that as soon as he began to think of himself and became self-conscious and self-introspective, he began to study the laws of the human consciousness, both individual and social. He found himself a bond-slave of passions and a number of weaknesses and of evil thoughts which were ruinous. This made him seek his real goal. Fixing as his goal self-realisation or moksha or perfect spiritual freedom, he began to work towards its attainment. He fell in love with God who he found was another name for infinite power and was truth in action, truth in daily, hourly experience. He therefore said God is truth. He also found that truth came home to him in the form of inexorable law. The law of life, the law of being, both individual and social, was what he was most concerned with. He also found that the law which operated as the basic principle of human evolution was love, the power of identification, the power which brings home to man the feeling of oneness, the feeling of friendliness, brotherhood, cooperation.

From this discovery of love, what followed in Gandhi's case was the doctrine of ahimsa which he interpreted and experimented with anew. Ahimsa meant for him not merely the negative approach of non-injury to sentient beings but a positive and aggressive attitude of doing good through service. The secret of his full dedication to the service of mankind and his relentless fight against every evil which came in the way of the realisation of truth, of the operation of the law of love, of social evolution towards peace and harmony, was this attitude of love and identity with the interests of the whole of suffering, struggling humanity which was batting against its own weaknesses. His was a life of daily seeking, of an hourly discovery of the truth of life, and he found that this search and discovery could be successful only through love, ahimsa, and the ceaseless service of God-in-man.

Thus he was a yogi in the sense that he was incessantly in

search of truth, that is, that he had the passion of a scientist for the discovery of truth. He went on experimenting with the truth of life, that is with the laws of human life and human evalution, individual and social. He learnt from the experiments he made and struck a path of life based on those experiments. He called the path satyagraha, since it was the insistence on truth through love, through ahimsa which took the form of service and sacrifice even unto death. He repeated many times that he was the author of the science of satyagraha and that he practised it as an art, as a fine art at that, for more than fifty years of his adult life.

Yogi he was, but since yoga takes so many forms, one would like to know what kind of yogi was he. He developed the skill (kaushala) of engineering the forces and powers within himself through the usual processes of purification, accumulation, control, concentration, and dedication. As he evolved a discipline along this line, he went on acting on the principle of love and ahimsa and his internal sadhana expressed itself in the external form of continuous service of mankind. He sought to teach mankind the same discipline or yoga, the skill of engineering its own forces along the lines of social evolution, which for him meant fight against all evil with the weapons of love and ahimsa, that is, satyagraha. He succeeded eminently in being a satyagrahi of the highest order. He succeeded partially and only to a modified extent in disciplining the masses along his own lines on certain issues and for a limited period. He fixed sarvodaya, the affluence of all through peaceful and constructive work, as his social target and worked for it without rest.

He was preeminently a man of action. This marks him off from many other social philosophers and social scientists. The latter arrive at intellectual systems of thought and formulate ideals and ideologies. But Gandhi never rested there or rather Gandhi began from the other end. He began with action. As soon as an idea appealed to him, the moment he thought that some action was good for progress and improvement, he started to act, testing the idea through actual experiments. But in carrying out his experiments he adopted the attitude of a

karmayogi. The prerequisites of a man of action, namely an indomitable will to act in spite of any obstacle and the faculty of quick and firm decision, were his. He had always at his disposal abundant energy to act. Being completely devoid of any selfish interests or motives his actions were always planned objectively and with a view to effecting proper results. He pursued them with single-mindedness and was never attached to the fruit of his actions. He followed the discipline of the *Gita* in being free from attachment to the fruit but at the same time fully concentrating on proper thought and action. Then there was complete dedication to God of whatever he did. This gave his actions a universality all their own.

Thus all the elements of a karmayogi were present in his attitude, in his planning of action, and in the execution of his plans. Whether it was the simple act of feeding a patient or receiving a guest or whether it was teaching a child to spin or whether it was a revolutionary act such as the picking up of untaxed salt on the sea beach at Dandi, all the principles of karmayoga were ever present to him. His emphasis on action was extraordinary. When even his nearest followers and colleagues would be discussing Hamlet-like whether to be or not to be, he would straightaway begin to act when once he was convinced that his was a proper, truthful and nonviolent action. Theory is no theory unless tested by practice, he would say. An ounce of practice is worth tons of theory, he declared many times. Life is not a thought nor an idea nor an act of imagination, it is action, first and last. Even sitting quiet is action. Even death is action. That is why the *Gita* has said that not a moment can one live without some action. Even thought is action. Jean Paul Sartre has argued that writing too is action, 'it was action in self-discovery'. Gandhi wrote without stint but always round some action, to explain it, to propagate it, to perpetuate it. He first acted and then explained it. Thought and action were so synchronous with him that it was sometimes difficult to say which came first. Even the things which he afterwards felt were wrong were done because of his emphasis on 'action first'. When a child of eleven, he began eating meat as soon as the

argument of his Muslim companion appealed to him. He did not wait. He condemned drinking milk in early days because he thought it promoted passions. He gave it up and even prevented children from drinking it. He relented in both cases. He read at one single stretch Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. The ideas appealed to him. He immediately tried to give them shape in the form of the Phoenix Settlement—whatever the cost. He launched civil disobedience in 1919 and when he saw that violence was abroad he immediately relented and said that it was a Himalayan blunder. This kind of 'writing' about his actions was indeed 'action in self-discovery' in terms of Sartre's definition of writing as action. But it must be remembered that action or karma by itself is not yoga. karma is yogic and there is karmayoga only when the doer of karma does it without attachment to the fruit but with the spirit of dedication, without self-interest but with and for the fullest interest of those for whom it is meant, without the least egoism but with the full consciousness that he is an instrument of God or the cosmic forces, without any selfish desire for the result but with the greatest skill necessary for bringing about a particular kind of result.

Judged by these standards, Gandhi's whole life was the life of a karmayogi. But his karmayoga was not merely or only karmayoga. What he followed and embodied in his life was the triple yoga, the synthesis of the three yogas, karma, bhakti, jnana,

Gandhi was an integralist, that is, he believed in oneness, wholeness, in the indivisibility of truth or existence or God. His faith in God was the bedrock on which his karmayoga was built. Sometimes it is difficult to say whether he was a bhaktiyogi or karmayogi. He declares his faith in God to such an extent that he has said he cannot live even for a moment but for the belief that God exists and that he and everything lives and moves and has its being in God. Gandhi's faith in God was not a mere matter of intellect. It was a matter of his heart, of an emotional belief with the whole being in the existence of God.

For any real, effective karma or action of the highest order, it is not enough to have mere physical energy or only fully

functioning karmendriyas (senses which are involved in karma) as distinguished from jnanendriyas (senses required mainly for perception). For action to be sustained, purposeful and powerful a fund of emotional energy channelled in a particular direction is necessary. For all we know, Gandhi was very rich in emotional energy. His passion, his feelings for humanity, his readiness to sacrifice everything for the sake of the causes he loved, his ability to make every one feel that he loved each one the most, all show that he was an almost inexhaustible dynamo of emotional energy.

It is exactly this emotional ennergy which is the raw material for the development of bhaktiyoga. Basically emotional energy manifests itself in the form of likes and dislikes, attraction and repulsion, attachment and detestation. Love and hatred are the result of likes and dislikes respectively. While love is a positive emotion and the very stuff of emotional energy, hatred is negative and is, in fact, the extreme and total want of love. Love is the greatest constructive force in existence. It is creative in essence and formative. But for it, life itself would collapse and disappear.

Engineering of this emotional power of man with a view to integrating and heightening all the other powers which constitute his personality, is a problem set for all who wish to use this power consciously and purposefully. The bhaktiyogi is one who wants to bring this power under control and use it for God-realisation which is also self-realiation. Gandni wrote that, 'Man's ultimate aim is the realisation of God, and all his activities, social, political, and religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God'. He started as a sceptic, for some time he was an agnostic but his faith in God matured early enough to make him follow the path of bhaktiyoga—a devotion-centred, dedicated life. He once wrote, 'I was first lacking in faith but I acquired it by contemplation and study of religions. It grows day by day as I have an increasing realisation of the fact that God abides with me in my heart.' This shows that in the case of Gandhi, the cultivation of bhaktiyoga was a deliberate and conscious process.

If one follows carefully the course of Gandhi's bhakti and its development, one can see how his attachment to everything else ultimately merged in his love of God and uttermost faith in Him. He first divested himself of all selfish and sinful thoughts and saw to it that his affection for all other things was transformed into love of God, the one Supreme Reality, the Truth of Truths. His concentration on the thought that God was all in all and that everything, including the whole of his life and action were in and of God, grew with his growth, till he completely dedicated himself to the service of God and man-in-God. All this spiritual growth, he says, 'has been unnoticed like the crown of hair on our heads'. His love of God and unshakable faith in Him were abiding. This is demonstrably evident from what he said at one of the supreme moments of his life, namely, at the time of his last fast in Delhi: 'With God as my supreme and sole counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other advisers.'

While we see that it was this full faith in God and his bhaktiyoga which reinforced his karmayoga and invested his actions with universal significance, we should not make the mistake of thinking that he was a believer in a personal God or that he was a blind believer in some supreme and mysterious power. He has explained times without number his idea of God. The God he loved, the God he worshipped, the God he followed was not the usual God of the so-called religious people or the superstitious nor the jealous God who dispenses favours and punishments. His conception of God is derived from his reasoning, his scrutiny of every conception of God and his experiments with the many eminent ideas about God. That is how and why he variously designates God as Truth, as Love, as Law. He does not merely conceive God, he experiences Him in every breath of his own life and in everything that happens all around. He says, God is a 'presence'. God is wrapping us all round or rather we are wrapped in God. This is described in the *Gita* as brahma-samsparsha, that is, intimate contact with the Reality all round us. At one time he says, God is the inner voice. He is the conscience and is the reflection of the reality, which is at once transcendant and immanent. His arrival at God is through

jnanayoga, the yoga of logic, of thought, of intellection, of the reasoning power of man. While his immense energy and will-power drive him to immediate action, he sees and realises that that action alone can be powerful, effective and of unîversal significance which is done without injury to any one and according to the principles of karmayoga. He experiences the ecstasies of selfless action, action without attachment, action done in the spirit of service and sacrifice, action dedicated to the supreme cosmic power which in fact is acting in and through him and all. He enjoys the karma samadhi indicated in the *Gita*.

But his karmayoga is buttressed by his bhaktiyoga. Action is not mere action for him, it is worship full of love of the divine in everything and present everywhere. Every act is an act of love, of loving service, of complete surrender to the supreme power of which he is but an insignificant and humble instrument.

His is the fulfilment and joy of communion through love and identity. His karmayoga and bhaktiyoga, however, are purified and tested by his ever alert and powerful intelligence and an awakened sense of right and wrong, proper and improper, or just and unjust. Jnana is described as a power which has the capacity to give the soul its complete freedom by destruction not only of ignorance but also of the bondage of karma. His jnanayoga is able to keep his soul above any possible lapse or ignorance or inertia. His therefore is the joy of union through knowledge with the Supreme Intelligence itself.

Gandhi thus wears a triple crown. He has earned it through incessant, loving action, dedicated to truth and pursued through ahimsa. The three yogas or the synthesis of the three yogas themselves thus found in Gandhi a living example, which otherwise would have been thought to be merely an idea. While text books on yoga give us ideas, Gandhi gave a demonstration for which the world shall ever remain indebted.

From Gandhi to Christ: God as Suffering Love

JAMES W. DOUGLASS

Before inquiring into Gandhi's relationship to Christ and from there into a nonviolent Christology, it is necessary to consider first a phenomenon which provides a significant contrast to Gandhi's experiments in truth and which will suggest why Gandhi is so important today for an understanding of the Christian Gospel: the scandal of Western Christianity's denial of its own truth.

From the standpoint of both modern theology and the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church, there is no question that the truth of the Gospel is itself the living person of Jesus Christ; born, suffering, dying and redeeming, raised to lordship by the Father. The truth proclaimed by Christianity is the truth of a living person. The claim of the Gospel is that God's truth has become incarnate and redemptive, has been revealed in the person and life of Jesus. The further claim of the Church is that this living truth of Jesus is present today in the community of faithfully witnessing believers. Christian truth is Jesus Christ; the incarnate truth of Jesus remains present in the mystical identity between Christ and the faithful, whoever these may be. At the centre of any definition of Christian truth is therefore its nature as incarnation, a truth whose fulness is the life of Jesus and whose continuing presence is that same life as given in the Holy Spirit (but resisted by sin) in his followers. This is not to deny the truth of the dogmatic formulations of Jesus' self-revelation made by the Church, but rather to assert that these are true in a way guardian to the scripturally given incarnation of truth in Jesus himself. In terms of truth, the function of dogma is largely negative; in Karl Rahner's words, 'to prevent the self-utterance of Jesus being distorted or

truncated.'[1] So profoundly vital and personal is the Incarnation that an objective observer should be able to discern this, the full truth of Christianity, simply in the normal life of Christians, without reference to dogma or even scripture. Thus it was that Paul, for example, gave over his entire existence to the living truth of Christ; to encounter Paul at that stage was to encounter in him the incarnate truth of the Gospel. Such are the implications of Christian truth as defined fully in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. 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.'[2]

Yet it must be admitted that such a living truth has not always been reflected in the life of Christians. In a comment which cuts too deeply far nice ecumenism at the same time as it carries judgment for those who would dismiss it, a sensitive critic of Christianity has written: 'The doctrine of the Incarnation, which says that redemption already exists in this world, has always tempted Christians to make their peace with whatever this world has been at any given time.'[3] The form of the Incarnation Christians worship, that of humility, service, suffering love, and a sacrificial death, has seldom been matched by the cultural forms they have identified with 'incarnationally'. To judge from contemporary Christianity in particular, a belief in the Incarnation as true would seem to involve a built-in political and social conservatism, if not a fear-ridden reaction against all that lives and moves in the world under the banner of revolution. In terms of Christian truth, Christianity today is its own denial. What it has incarnated is not the living truth of Jesus. On the contrary, to take two specific examples from the Catholic Christianity professed by the writer: 'The word was made flesh, and dwelt respectably among us white citizens' describes a significant aspect of the incarnationalism of American Catholicism, just as

1. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, 'Jesus Christ', *Theological Dictionary* (Herder and Herder: 1965), p. 239.
2. Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (John Knox Press: 1966), p. 49.
3. Steven S. Schwarzschild, 'A Little Bit of a Revolution?', *The Secular City Debate* (Macmillan: 1966), p. 148.

'dwelt among us fascists' reflects the lived faith of another national Catholicism. An examination of these particular incarnations of Catholic Christianity, as they are analyzed in two current studies, will clarify the nature of the Christian contradiction, or 'incarnational heresy', which is now evident everywhere. On the other hand, it may also indicate the promise of a truly Catholic faith.

The Capitulation, an essay by the German Catholic writer, Carl Amery,[4] presents us with both the profound failure of German Catholicism and the kind of framework needed to analyze in depth our own incarnational heresies. Amery compares the present state of West German Catholicism to that of the Church under those sovereigns following Constantine who assigned special tasks to her: tasks which guided the Church away from dangerous criticisms of the system while reinforcing the ruler's control over it. The effect on the Church was to leave her in a paradoxical state of power and powerlessness, established and muted; so too, the Church in Western Germany. Amery's thesis is that the new sovereign in Germany, whose power is unprecedented in any single monarch, is the milieu. German Catholicism is dominated by a lower middle-class milieu which has stifled the primary Christian virtues under layers of honesty, punctuality, cleanliness, dependability, diligence—the kind of secondary virtues which like Adolf Eichmann's obedience can be pressed into any cause.

To such a system of values, framing the 'decent' life and summed up in the slogan of the cultural mail order business, 'Decorate your house', German Catholicism has capitulated. An analysis of that capitulation, from 1933 onwards, raises the critical questions which must become prominent among German Catholics today if belief is to be raised finally from a dying 'Milieu-Catholicism'. It was Milieu-Catholicism, with its ideals of solidarity and civic virtue, which provided the background and

4. I have read in galley sheets the two books referred in this section, *The Capitulation* by Karl Amery and *The Segregated Covenant* by William Osborne (both Herder and Herder: 1967) and can therefore give no precise page references.

rationale for the individual capitulations to the Nazis, and it is Milieu-Catholicism which must be uprooted today to prevent an equally established and unconscious Church from arriving at its '1933'.

Essentially then *The Capitulation* is an essay on power as understood in two dimensions, political or cultural power, and Christic power. Due to German Catholicism's almost complete domination by cultural power, Amery is able to suggest only faintly in his own context the kind of power which a genuinely christocentric ecclesiology might attain. At first glance it may seem scarcely impressive: against the Nazis a Church drastically reduced in numbers and destined for perhaps total martyrdom. But a contrast to the powerless power of the compromised Church raises the necessary questions: In what, after all, does true power demand a total witness at every step, as opposed to the impotence of Milieu-Catholicism to achieve anything in or out of crisis beyond its own sterile survival? Would Pius XII's power to change men, for example, have been greater had his unquestionable sensitive conscience been less dominated by another Milieu-Catholicism? How can a faith defined as 'catholic' ever be consistent in identifying itself with the alternately protective and oppressive institutions of a particular milieu? Questions such as these bring one to the threatening question: How long before the next capitulation?

The Segregated Covenant by William Osborne raises, at least by implication, the same kind of question in an American context. Osborne's book is a careful study of race relations and American Catholics. Predictably enough, the results of his survey do not add up to a very convincing imitation of Christ by American Catholics faced by 'the nation's number one moral problem', as their bishops described the race question in 1958. The dismal pattern of segregated schools, hospitals, and churches, of a few courageous voices raised against massive apathy and hostility, is repeated in each successive region and city with a few outstanding exceptions; particularly the archdioceses of St Louis and Detroit where Cardinal Ritter and Archbishop Dearden have committed the Church to a strong attack on racism. But the

over-all picture of a white church holding itself aloof from black agony for more than a century leaves little doubt in one's mind that Carl Amery's characterization of Milieu-Catholicism is applicable here. The dictation from culture to Church on race noted by Osborne in southwestern Louisiana holds true for the American nation as a whole: 'The basic relationship between the Church and its cultural setting remains precisely what it was before the Civil War. It can ameliorate slavery and segregation, it temporizes with them and even cooperates in their maintenance. Then as change inevitable, again its best effort seems to be acceptance and cooperation with the new order. This remarkable ability to adapt to environment has been made possible, unwittingly of course, by an introverted theology narrowly focussed on personal salvation via the sacramental system.'

If American middle-class virtues have not been drafted for the building of crematoria, neither have they encouraged any resistance among Catholics to the murderous techniques of white respectability. To put it sociologically, Catholics have been too preoccupied establishing themselves in a predominantly Protestant milieu to concern themselves dangerously over the plight of a much more beleaguered minority. But better theologically, American Catholicism has by indifference and enmity pounded at least its share of milieu-given nails into the Negro Christ. That it continues to do so with little hesitation, despite the publicized condemnations of racism by bishops and the long-overdue presence of clergy in demonstrations, shows that a catholic Church has hardly begun to be born beneath the mantle of a Milieu-Catholicism.

To return to the issue defined incarnationally, what do these portraits of Milieu-Catholicism,[5] which compromise two of the supposedly most dynamic national Catholicisms of our time an-

5. Other studies which substantiate further the existence of Milieu-Catholicism in Germany and the United States include *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars* by Gordon C. Zahn (Sheed and Ward), *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* by Guenter Lewy (McGraw: 1964), and *Nationalism and American Catholicism* by Dorothy Dohen (Sheed & Ward: 1966).

alyzed in terms of their major moral challenges, have to say about the presence of Christ in the modern Church? It is obvious that the most significant statements would have to be negative: Christ was not visible here in the Church, nor his love and justice there; or more to the point, Christ was beaten here by the faithful, and crucified there over their curious stares. Milieu-Catholicism, whether of Germany or America, or for that matter, of Spain, England, Italy, or whatever, has not only failed to reveal the presence of Christ in response to pressing moral issues but has played a significant role in denying it even as a possibility. It has too seldom been thought prudent for the Church, in clergy or laity, to act immediately and instinctively with the reconciling power of an agape transcendent to a national ethos. Not a living Christ, present as transcendent love, but a dying milieu, incarnate in all its cultural controls, has been the apparent motif of national Catholicisms in the modern world.

But if Catholic Christianity is measured by the essence of its claim, by a faith in the universal truth of Jesus Christ, scripturally given and dogmatically protected, rather than by the conduct of its formal membership, then the presence of Christ becomes in the last analysis independent of the corruption of a sinful Church. What this means in theological terms is the precedence of grace over nature in the unveiling of God's presence in man, thus eclipsing any natural claims to moral pre-eminence —including the religious pride and moral claims of self-proclaimed believers—by the dual mystery of God's frequent absence in belief and of his often striking presence in unbelief. What a genuinely 'universal Catholicism' means further in regard to the presence of Christ in the world is that such a presence must be defined in a living way, as Christ himself defined it passively in terms of those in suffering need (Matthew 25, 34-40) and as his own life and death unfolded his presence actively in terms of suffering love. In seeking out the presence of Christ in his world, Christians must therefore become less and less interested in themselves as Christians and focus instead on the living reality of Christ, whether in belief or unbelief, as the invitation of suffering need and as the graceful response of suffering love.

What is then seen to be common to Christ's passive and active presence in the world is man in the state of suffering, as he first cries out in suffering for the aid of his brother and as he secondly in the person of the brother lays down his goods and his life in suffering response to that cry. If it is then recognized that suffering is the one earthly reality with which God identifies himself universally in the person of Jesus Christ, who becomes present to suffering through the love of the Holy Spirit, it will be seen that the Catholic Faith—by re-emphasizing the active presence of Christ as suffering love over those dogmatic formulations which, however true, have been frozen rather than fulfilled—can be true to its self-definition as a witness to the living and universal Christ.

It can be suggested therefore that a living and scripturally founded doctrine of the Incarnation, as opposed to the theory and practice of a Milieu-Catholicism, will centre on suffering love as the redemptive reality and active presence of Christ in the world. From this standpoint, German Catholicism, and American Catholicism on race, can be understood and evaluated best as incarnational heresies, which is to say, as choices made for a theoretical faith to the exclusion of the living Christic reality of suffering love. The truth of Jesus while remaining dogmatically protected has not become flesh in a living, suffering belief. Modern Christianity has been incarnate instead only in the wrong flesh, that of self and of the extended culture self.

The significance of Gandhi, for a Christianity which has capitulated to its various milieus and thus become an incarnational heresy, is that Gandhi concentrated his entire life and being on the Christic reality of suffering love. Moreover, through his experiments in truth he committed himself to suffering love in such a way that the power of Christ was demonstrated in terms of a social and political revolution.

It has become customary for contemporary theologians, in a genuine effort to respond to the needs of our time, to describe the Gospel as revolutionary. At this point in history, however, the revolution of the Gospel is hardly recognizable to a revolutionary dedicated to the transformation of a corrupt society. For it is

too well known and accepted that revolution, or 'rebellion' (the conservative equivalent for revolution), is identified in Christianity with the root sin of Satan. Since rebellion is presumably satanic, and obedience is held to be holiness, a Milieu-Christianity will labour righteously to crush any revolution against its cultural deities. The object of damnation in a Milieu-Christianity is not the obedience of an Eichmann but the rebellion of a draft-card burner. It is not surprising therefore that in our vanishing Christendom there have been many Christian men of peace, whose peace, was held in honour so long as it was not pitted directly against the institutions of war, but few Christian revolutionaries, especially in this age of revolution. Yet peace divorced from that revolution which would right injustice is just as futile today as revolution divorced from that peace which would keep it radically just. The peacemakers and those who hunger and thirst for justice are blessed together because they are the same.

Gandhi recognized peace and revolution as integral. He experimented with the Christic power of peace, suffering love, to realise the social revolution demanded equally by conscience. By not involving himself in any Milieu-Christianities, Gandhi kept himself independent of incarnational heresies and worshipped none of the gods of established disorder. He was therefore free to re-open the way for a return to the Gospel of Peace and to the revolutionary power of the cross which stands at its summit.

In view of the heresy characteristic of the West, the relationship of the Hindu Gandhi to the person of Christ can be described as the most living belief in the Incarnation given in our time, and that in full recognition of the fact that Gandhi did not confess Jesus as the only Son of God. For Gandhi had a profound sense of the suffering, loving Christ: '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 nonviolence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal. And I know that there are hundreds of Christians who believe likewise. Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not

teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal Law of Love.'[6]

Gandhi rejected Christianity for the sake of Jesus: 'Today I rebel against orthodox Christianity, as I am convinced that it has distorted the message of Jesus. He was an Asiatic whose message was delivered through many media, and when it had the backing of a Roman Emperor it became an imperialist faith as it remains to this day.'[7]

Gandhi understood and revered Christ as catholic and could not reconcile the universal meaning he saw in him with the imperialist faith he met in Christianity. In rejecting the Milieu-Christianity of the West, he rejected as well the Church and doctrines he associated with it. Gandhi did not accept Jesus as the only Son of God because that doctrine as presented to him by friends anxious to claim him for Christianity always struck him as too exclusive: 'It was more than I could belive that Jesus was the only incarnate son of God and that only he who believed in him would have everlasting life. If God could have sons, all of us were his sons.'[8]

At the same time Gandhi could give this testimony to the person of Jesus: 'I refuse to believe that there now exists or has ever existed any person that has not made use of his (Jesus') example to lessen his sins, even though he may have done so without realising it. The lives of all have, in some greater or lesser degree, been changed by his presence, his actions, and the words spoken by his divine voice . . . and because the life of Jesus has the significance and the transcendency to which I have alluded, I believe that he belongs not solely to Christianity, but

6. M.K. Gandhi, *The Law of Love*, edited and published by Anand T. Hingorani (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan: 1962), p. 79. Gandhi's views on Christ have been collected in three, somewhat overlapping works, two small books and a pamphlet: *The Law of Love; The Message of Jesus Christ*, edited and published by Anand T. Hingorani (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan: 1963), the most complete source on the subject; *What Jesus Means to Me*, compiled by R.K. Prabhu (Navjivan Publishing House: 1959).
7. *What Jesus Means to Me*, p. 33.
8. *The Message of Jesus Christ*, p. 11.

to the entire world'.[9]

For Gandhi as for Bonhoeffer after him, 'Jesus preached not a new religion, but a new life. He called men to repentance.'[10]

To define the catholic Christ of Gandhi more precisely, one can say that Gandhi committed himself to Christ morally in the Sermon on the Mount, which he felt 'was delivered not merely to the peaceful disciples but to the groaning world'.[11] He wrote: 'The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount echoed something I had learnt in childhood and something which seemed to be part of my being and which I felt was being acted up to in the daily life around me. . . . This teaching was non-retaliation, or non-resistance to evil.'[12]

The cross was, again, a reality meant for all men: 'The Cross, undoubtedly, makes a universal appeal the moment you give it a universal meaning in place of the narrow one that is often heard at ordinary meetings.'[13] Gandhi followed Christ in identifying genuine faith and discipleship with the taking up of one's personal cross. In a talk given to a group of Christians on Christmas Day, he said: 'We dare not think of birth without death on the cross. Living Christ means a living Cross, without it life is a living death.'[14]

Gandhi's faith in the power of nonviolence was therefore profoundly Christocentric with reference to:

(1) The Sermon on the Mount: 'If, then, I had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and my own interpretation of it, I should not hesitate to say: "Oh yes, I am a Christian." But I know that, at the present moment, if I said any such thing, I would lay myself open to the gravest misinterpretation.'[15]

(2) The cross, which he confronted once in a crucifix at the Vatican, and later wrote: 'What would not I have given to be

9. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
12. *What Jesus Means to Me*, p. 13.
13. *The Message of Jesus Christ*, p. 22-23.
14. *What Jesus Means to Me*, p. 16.
15. *The Message of Jesus Christ*, p. 44.

able to bow my head before the living image at the Vatican of Christ Crucified! It was not without a wrench that I could tear myself away from that scene of living tragedy. I saw there at once that nations, like individuals, could only be made through the agony of the Cross and in no other way. Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others, but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself.'[16]

To return our attention to the Christianity which Gandhi rejected, there the Christological problem of our time can be posed with reference to that milieu-consciousness which has so often meant capitulation for the Christian conscience. Our Christological problem would then rightly take the form of the same two questions which Jesus asked the disciples in the passage which constitutes the centre of the earliest Gospel (Mark 8. 27-29), with the difference in fact that in our case we can hardly hear Jesus' decisive second question. The simple preliminary question which Jesus asked the disciples, 'Who do men say that I am?' is virtually the only one his modern disciples have recognized. But Jesus' first question concerning himself is the sociological question, the question of current opinion, to which the proper form of answer is simply the descriptive response given by the disciples in Mark: 'Some say . . . others say . . .' Yet the contemporary Christian answer to this question has been, on the one hand, the basis for an irrelevant dismissal, and on the other, a substitute for faith. On the one hand, Christians have heard this first question as 'Who do secular men say that I am?', and have dismissed these answers as the expressions of a belligerent unbelief. On the other hand, they have heard the the question as 'Who do Christian men say that I am?', and have accepted those equally milieu-given answers as the form of their own faith instead of recognizing them as the reflections of a popular religiosity. In neither case has the response to Jesus' first question served the purpose he intended, namely, to serve merely as the background for an altogether personal confession of faith paralleling that of Peter. As for Jesus' second and

16. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

decisive question of faith, abruptly divorcing each disciple from the support of his secular-Christian milieu and confronting him with the fearful task of personal decision, 'But who do you say that I am?', the Christian of today normally does not even hear it. The question of a deeply personal, and therefore self-critical response to Christ does not arise in a Milieu-Christianity. For it is there that Christ is defined for all by consensus, which is to say, by cultural dogma.

In the absence of any real theological recognition of the incessant demand of Christ, 'But who do you—you modern disciples—say that I am?', cultural dogma has easily prevailed. The cultural faith of men in the church-going Jesus who comforts the comfortable and afflicts the afflicted has removed the Church from Christ's urgent demand for a living faith in himself. Christology is today the most neglected area of theology in the Catholic Church because the Church has not yet distinguished herself radically enough from her milieu to be able to hear the critical question of her master, 'But who do you say that I am?' The Church is still too self-absorbed in resisting the answers of secular man and in defending the answers of 'Catholic culture' to hear the question asked of her real self by the person to whom she is wedded. Nor can the problem be solved by believers on a deeper institutional level by retreating from the milieu into a properly dogmatic understanding of Christ. While a milieu can never provide the substance of faith, it will always exist as its context. The truth of the Council of Chalcedon is unable to answer Christ's question to the modern disciple. When Chalcedon's formulation is taken as finally definitive for the Church today it will be found in fact, as Karl Rahner has shown at length,[17] that a contemporary consciousness will have overlain fifth-century concepts so as to revise them into the figure of mythological Christ.

In a perceptive article, Father John Dunne has stated incisively the Christological problem of our time: 'In our culture,

17. Karl Rahner, 'Current Problems in Christology', *Theological Investigations*, Volume 1: *God, Christ, Mary and Grace* (Darton, Longman & Todd: 1961), pp. 149-200.

where Jesus is the archetypal man, the culture hero, it is necessary to move to a position where he can be seen as truly human. To feel the overwhelming mystery of the incarnation in our time it is necessary to pass from the initial stage in which we find ourselves where Jesus is the culture hero, through an intermediate stage in which he becomes fully and unequivocally human for us, to a final stage in which we can appreciate the unending wonder of the statement "Jesus is the Lord".'[18]

That exaltation of Jesus in the Father which Catholic Christianity takes for granted can reveal its shattering truth to the mind and heart of the believer only if he has first known Jesus as man. But if we are to confront Jesus fully as man in the context of a Milieu-Christianity, where Jesus is the culture hero, a special discipline is required: one must 'pass over to the subjective standpoint of Jesus'. It is only in passing over to the standpoint of Jesus himself and in sensing something of its normal human character—relative, changing, growing in his understanding of God's will—that the humanity of Jesus can be affirmed with a depth which will open us to the truth of his exaltation. While recognizing the uncertainty of our grounds and the consequent risks involved in thus passing over to the standpoint of Jesus, we must still make this attempt if we are to free ourselves both from the cultural Jesus who reveals only the gods of our time and form the mythological Jesus, the God charading in human form, who hides beneath our professions of the Chalcedonian formula.

The possibility of such an existential Christology has been recognized cautiously by Karl Rahner: 'A Christology using categories appropriate to the description of consciousness need not be false, *a priori* or impossible. If there is an ontic Christology, there can be an existential one.'[19]

In view, however, of the popular heresies uncovered by Rahner in his analysis of Catholic'sm's now almost exclusively

18. John S. Dunne, 'The Human God: Jesus', in the first of the *Commonweal Papers*, a special issue of *Commonweal on God* (February 10, 1967), pp. 510-11.
19. 'Current Problems in Christology', p. 172.

ontic Christology, it can be said more truly that if there is to be a living ontic Christology today, then there *must* also be an existential one—to grant new life and clarity to terms which as they stand now have to be translated by theologians before the meaning of the Creed is evident. An extended re-definition of 'ontological person' and 'nature' in an effort to re-create for us their original meaning and vividness will simply not do for a living belief in Jesus Christ today. The glory contained in the ontic meaning of the man-God is dependent on a prior existential perception of his humanity. One assumes that such a perception was present in the ontic categories themselves at a time when they carried far more weight than they do now. But today in a very different idiom there are too many unrecognized heresies already deadening the community of faith for us to avoid trying to do anew what was always necessary from the beginning, to know Jesus fully as man in order then to confess him fully as God. Thus one can only emphasize the truth of Rahner's observation that existential statements on Christ's mind are 'extremely useful in filling out the formal emptiness of a *purely* ontic Christological statement, which would otherwise be in danger of being filled out in some other way . . .'[20]

How, then, can we pass over to the subjective standpoint of Jesus?

Father Dunne suggests that the key for doing so is Jesus' relations to John the Baptist. By analyzing Jesus' life in terms of these relations, we can see certain great turning points in his growing understanding of himself and his work. These turning points confirm the changing character of Jesus' standpoint and underline his humanity. More particularly, they reveal his life as one of receiving and communicating unconditional love.

While following the method of passing over to Jesus' standpoint, we can nevertheless begin to analyze Jesus' life at a different point in the Gospel which is more interior to Jesus himself than his relations to 'John and which can perhaps culminate in a deeper insight to his self-understanding. One

20. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

can begin with the concept of the ebed Yahweh the Suffering Servant of God.

The Suffering Servant of Yahweh is, first of all, a profoundly Jewish concept, rooted in the Servant poems of Isaiah and exemplified in the living history of Judaism. The primary meaning of the ebed Yahweh as given in Isaiah is that the Servant of God through his innocent suffering and death takes the place of the many who should suffer instead of him. The truth revealed in the ebed Yahweh is therefore that salvation comes through suffering: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with stripes we are healed . . . the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth . . . . Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself, an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities . . . he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercessions for the transgressors.' (Isa. 53. 5-7, 10-12)

The problem of the Servant's identity in the poems of Isaiah has centred on the question whether an individual personality or a collective one was intended by the unknown author. The problem is resolved by the interpretation of modern scholars based on the corporate personality of Israelite thought, according to which the prophet is thought to have intended the individual in whom the people are recapitulated. So far as the more divisive question goes, of the fulfilment of the servant figure in history, Christians should be prepared to acknowledge at this point that its corporate meaning has been revealed profoundly in the continuing pilgrimage of the People who gave it birth. A Jewish scholar has put it well: 'From Isaiah 53 forward, Jews have

thought about the meaning of their anguished history, and have seen their suffering as an atonement for humanity, and themselves as the sin-offering of the world.'[21] A Christian interpretation of Jesus in the light of the ebed Yahweh must begin by acknowledging the figure's corporate realization in the suffering history of Israel. The Judaism from which Jesus drew his developing consciousness of the ebed Yahweh is the Judaism which has lived out the role of the ebed Yahweh through the millenia of tears since then.

The beginning of Jesus' consciousness that he had to realize the task of the Suffering Servant can be traced to the moment of his baptism by John in the Jordan (Mark 1.11). In one of the most thorough treatments of Jesus as the Suffering Servant,[22] Oscar Cullman has emphasized the importance of the fact that at Jesus' baptism the words of the voice from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased,' are a quotation from the opening line of the ebed Yahweh poems (Isa. 42.1). In Isaiah these words are addressed by Yahweh to his Servant. For Jesus to have heard them spoken to him at his baptism must have compelled a recognition that he had to take on the full role of the ebed Yahweh, as introduced in Isaiah in terms of God's favour but destining him in the unfolding drama of the poems 'to pour out his soul to death'. The Gospel of John confirms this interpretation by the words of John the Baptist, 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1.29), which relate Jesus' baptism to his vicarious suffering as 'a lamb that is led to the slaughter'. Jesus' two subsequent references to his baptism (Mark 10.38 and Luke 12.50) both show that for him to be baptized has come to mean the same as to die. For he has been baptized into a vision and a task of suffering.

The development of Jesus' conscious identification with the ebed Yahweh can be followed through the Gospel in terms of

21. Jacob Neusner, 'The Assignment of Guilt', *Continuum* (Autumn 1966), p. 432.

22. Oscar Cullmann, 'Jesus, the Suffering Servant of God', *The Christology of the New Testament* (The Westminster Press: 1959), pp. 51-82.

his more and more frequent references to his suffering and death as central to the work he must accomplish: the bridegroom who will be taken away (Mark 2.20); the prophecies of death following Peter's confession (Mark 8.31; 9.31; 10.33 ff.); the son of the vineyard owner killed by his tenants (Mark 12.1 ff), this rising sense of the ebed's task as impending is supported by Jesus' direct quotation from Isaiah 53 with reference to himself: 'For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me. "And he was reckoned with transgressors"; for what is written about me has its fulfilment,' (Luke 22.37). Jesus' allusions to Isaiah 52-53 include his sayings at the Lord's Supper, where he announces that he will shed his blood for many. Finally, the one other concept which figures prominently in Jesus' own formulation of his work, that of the Son of Man, is united in his understanding with the theme of the Suffering Servant: 'For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10-45). As Cullman says, 'It is as if Jesus said, "The Son of man came to fulfil the task of the ebed Yahweh." '[23] While Jesus refers to himself in the Gospel as the Son of Man because the title is more comprehensive with its eschatological overtones, he nevertheless merges this title with the meaning of the ebed Yahweh so that the vocation of the ebed becomes the main content of the Son of Man's earthly work.

The self-designation of Jesus as the Suffering Servant is so deeply rooted in the Gospel that Father John McKenzie has insisted that 'if this theme is not the work of Jesus himself then we know nothing about his words or his person'.[24] Its further prominence in the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles indicates that the disciples and the primitive community of believers saw this theme of suffering servanthood as the one which revealed the true identity of Jesus.

The decisive question asked of the disciples by Jesus, 'But who do you say that I am?', and which we have described as

23. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
24. John L. Mckenzie, S.J., *The Power and the Wisdom* (Bruce: 1965), p. 98.

a question almost unheard by the Church today, was not answered by Peter in terms of the ebed Yahweh. His response was instead, 'You are the Christ' (Mark 8.29). But what is significant about Peter's profession of faith is that Jesus wasn't satisfied with it. Not only did he go on to identify his own messianic vocation with great suffering, 'to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected . . . and be killed' (v. 31), but he sharply rebuked Peter's contrary suggestion that such suffering was somehow avoidable: 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men' (v.33). Essential to the definition of the Christ is suffering, rejection, and a sacrificial death. To profess a true faith in Jesus Christ is to profess a faith in Jesus the Suffering Servant.

It is significant that of the four passages in the New Testament which explicitly call Jesus pais, or servant, two occur in a speech attributed to Peter and two are spoken in prayers of the Church in the presence of Peter (Acts 3.13, 26; 4.27,30). Cullman has suggested that: 'The author may have preserved the precise memory that it was the Apostle Peter who by preference designated Jesus the "Suffering Servant of God" . . . . He, who had wanted to hear nothing of it during the lifetime of Jesus, made Jesus' suffering and death the very centre of his explanation of Jesus' earthly work.'[25]

But in the great Markan Christological passage, Jesus takes one step further after he fills out Peter's profession of faith with the Suffering Servant and rebukes him for professing a Christ without scandal. At this point the words of Gandhi re-assert themselves, 'Living Christ means a living Cross, without it life is a living death,' and find their foundation in Jesus' statement of what it means to follow him. For a faith in christ is not possible without the symbol and demanding reality which sums up a Christocentric life: 'If a man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (v. 34). Though Gandhi could not claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering was at the essence

25. 'Jesus, the Suffering Servant of God', p. 74.

of his faith in nonviolence and ruled all his actions. For him the suffering of Jesus so defined the Law of Love that love and suffering were seen as one in a single flame of life. And it is thus, in terms of suffering servanthood, that Jesus defined his own vocation on earth and the vocation of any man who would travel his way. Faith without crucifixion is meaningless. 'Christianity' therefore means nothing to Christ: 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven' (Matt. 7,21). If it is thought that the implications of this are too strong with regard to the Church, then there are also Jesus' words in the presence of his mother: 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother' (Mark 3.35). If we admit that Jesus loved his mother as much as he loves the Church, we can be safe in assuming that he would not hesitate to identify only those who do the will of God today as 'my bishops, my clergy, and my laity'. This would no more deny the special role of the Church than the Gospel statement denies the role of Jesus' mother. But it would point beyond established values and relationships to the single critical issue, doing God's will, and to the cross of suffering love which summarizes the revelation of that will. The truth of the ebed Yahweh that salvation comes through suffering is realized in Jesus' cross, and derivatively in all those who in taking up their own become one with him in the same, overcoming reality.

If the Suffering Servant is the key to Jesus' own growing understanding of his mission on earth, and thus the key to our understanding of his humanity, it is also true that only in passing over to the subjective standpoint of suffering servanthood which constitutes the Christic self-understanding shall we be able to affirm the full truth of Jesus' humanity. And, as we have seen, it is only by passing through Jesus' humanity that we can feel the overwhelming mystery of his divinity. The significance of this task of faith becomes evident in the fact that the essence of his humanity, suffering servanthood, is a reality which can hardly be understood except through an existential commitment to it as such. There can be no theoretical appropriation of the

meaning of suffering as it is expressed in the ebed Yahweh and in Jesus. Philosophers have not thought such thoughts, nor can they be expected to as philosophers, for reason will refuse to admit the necessity of embracing suffering in love until a committed life has lost itself in that salvific mystery. To follow to its conclusion the Markan Christological passage, we can understand Jesus' explanation of cross-bearing, 'whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it' (Mark 8.35), as the description of an existential passing over to the standpoint of Jesus' humanity—in suffering servanthood—and thus in this loss of autonomous life for Christic life a mediation, through the suffering love of Jesus' humanity, of the overwhelming mystery of Incarnation. This mystery is complete when the Son of Man 'comes in the glory of his Father' (v.38), but it is again a mystery whose realization is dependent on a committed passing over to the standpoint of suffering servanthood: 'For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.' These words also must have burned Peter and in retrospect deepened the Servant Christology in his consciousness. The only way to affirm, and be caught up in, the glory of Jesus in the Father is to affirm with one's own life the cross of Jesus' humanity. In this living cross of the believing community, because Jesus' own cross is now finished, resurrection is not on the way: it is here.

But in view of the incarnational heresies which deny that living cross, it is apparent that 'this adulterous and sinful generation' is a permanent phenomenon and that its primary locus today may be within Christianity. When the Gospel has become a fixture of culture, and thus been crowned with irrelevance, the discipline required to pass over to the standpoint of Jesus crucified must receive its inspiration from beyond that culture. For no Milieu-Christianity professes a living faith in the cross. To pass over the standpoint of the Suffering Servant, one must learn to see with new eyes, and must be struck by the lightning shock of the cross. It can be suggested that the kind of shock necessary

to pass over into the suffering love of the man Jesus is contained in the following report, filed from India by the United Press correspondent Webb Miller on May 21, 1930:

Prayers said as white-clad volunteers knelt in the moonlight and an impassioned speech by the poetess leader, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, opened the mass attack of 2,500 independence demonstrators on the Dharasana salt works.

The poetess, wearing a rough, home-spun robe and soft slippers, but no stockings, exhorted her followers to the raid.

'India's prestige is in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist: you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows.'

'Although Gandhiji's body is in prison, his soul goes with you', she cried as she sent the volunteers to the attack.

The cry of 'Gandhiji ki jai!' answered her from the dark ranks of volunteers huddled together in the dim light of early morning.

The volunteers formed in columns, with their leaders carrying ropes and wire cutters. They advanced slowly towards the salt works.

Heaps of glistening salt surrounded by the barbed wire entanglements erected by police were the objective of the brief march. About 400 native Surat police stood inside and outside the entanglements. Several British officers directed the police, who had orders to prevent the assembly of more than five persons.

Manilal Gandhi, second son of Gandhi, walked along the foremost of the marchers. As the throng drew near the salt pans they commenced chanting the revolutionary slogan, 'Inquilab Zindabad!' intoning the two words over and over.

The columns reached the salt works at 6.30 a.m. There were a few cheers and then the leaders, who had ropes, attempted to lasso the posts holding up the barbed wire, intending to uproot them. The police ran up and demanded that they disperse. the volunteers refused.

The column silenty ignored the warning and slowly walked

forward. . . .

Suddenly, at a word of command, scores of native police rushed upon the advancing marchers and rained blows on their heads with their steel-shod lathis. Not one of the marchers even raised an arm to fend off the blows. They went down like ten-pins. From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls. The waiting crowd of watchers groaned and sucked in their breaths in sympathetic pain at every blow.

Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing with pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes. The survivors without breaking ranks silently and doggedly marched on until struck down. When every one of the first column had been knocked down, stretcher-bearers rushed up unmolested by the police and carried off the injured to a thatched hut which had been arranged as a temporary hospital.

Then another column formed while the leaders pleaded with them to retain their self-control. They marched slowly towards the police. Although everyone knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up, without the encouragement of music, of cheering or any possibility that they might escape serious injury or death. The police rushed out and methodically and mechanically beat down the second column. There was no fight, no struggle: the marchers simply walked forward until struck down. There were no outcries, only groans after they fell. There were not enough stretcher-bearers to carry off the wounded: I saw eighteen injured being carried off simultaneously, while forty-two still lay bleeding on the ground awaiting stretcher-bearers. The blankets used as stretchers were sodden with blood. . . .

Several times the leaders nearly lost control of the waiting crowd. They rushed up and down, frantically pleading with and exhorting the intensely excited men to remember Gandhi's instructions. It seemed that the unarmed throng was on the verge

of launching a mass attack upon the Police. The British official incharge, Superintendent Robinson of Surat, sensed the imminence of an outbreak and posted twenty-five riflemen on a little knoll ready to fire. He came to me, inquiring my identity, and said: 'You'd better move aside out of the line of shooting. We may be forced to open fire into the crowd.' While we were talking, one of the Gandhi-ites, a young university student, ran up to Robinson, his face contorted by rage, tore open his cotton smock, exposing his bare breast, and shrieked: 'Shoot me, shoot me! Kill me, It's for my country!' The leaders managed to calm the crowd.

The Gandhi men altered their tactics, marched up in groups of twenty-five and sat on the ground near the salt pans, making no effort to draw nearer. Led by a coffee-coloured Parsi sergeant of police named Antia, a hulking, ugly-looking fellow, detachments of police approached one seated group and called up to them to disperse under the non-assemblage ordinance. The Gandhi followers ignored them and refused to even glance up at the lathis brandished threateningly above their heads. Upon a word from Antia, the beating commenced coldly, without anger. Bodies toppled over in threes and fours, bleeding from great gashes on their scalps. Group after group walked forward, sat down, and submitted to being beaten into insensibility without raising an arm to fend off the blows.

Finally the police became enraged by the non-resistance, sharing, I suppose, the helpless rage I had already felt at the demonstrators for not fighting back. They commenced savagely kicking the seated men in the abdomen and testicles. The injured men writhed and squealed in agony, which seemed to inflame the fury of the police, and the crowd again almost broke away from their leaders. The police then began dragging the sitting men by their arms or feet, sometimes for a hundred yards, and then throwing them into ditches. One was dragged into the ditch where I stood: the splash of his body doused me with muddy water. Another policeman dragged a Gandhi man to the ditch, threw him in, then belaboured him over the head with his lathi. Hour after hour stretcher-bearers carried back a stream of inert,

bleeding bodies.

Much of the time the stolid native Surat police seemed reluctant to strike. It was noticeable that when the officers were occupied on other parts of the line the police slackened, only to resume threatening and beating when the officers appeared again. I saw many intances of the volunteers pleading with the police to join them. . . .

By eleven the heat reached 116 in the shade and the activities of the Gandhi volunteers subsided. I went back to the temporary hospital to examine the wounded. They lay in rows on the bare ground in the shade of an open, palm-thatched shed. I counted 320 injured, many still insensible with fractured skulls, others in writhing agony from kicks in the testicles and stomach. The Gandhi men had been able to gather only a few native doctors, who were doing the best they could with the inadequate facilities. Scores of the injured had received no treatment for hours and two had died.[26]

The raid which Miller reported was resumed that evening, and 400 more volunteers were injured. Two days later in the nearby Satyagraha camp, after the police by similar methods had evacuated it of all but a few of Gandhi's followers, those remaining encountered the police again according to this description by one of them: 'The officer returned in the afternoon of the 23rd and looked into with great care all the papers of the inmates of the camp. Some twenty policemen surrounded us. We were going on with our own work. As it was hot we gave our police brethren a drink of cold fresh water. On the mornings of the 21st and 22nd, we had given them our blood as patiently and quietly. When the police came to drive us out of our place on the 22nd morning they helped themselves to some fruits from our larder which we had stocked for our wounded soldiers. If they had only asked us we should have given them the fruits

26. From an article by Miller published on May 22, 1930, in the *Chicago Daily News*, quoted by Gene Sharp, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power: Three Case Histories* (Navajivan Publishing House: 1960), pp. 138-42.

gladly.'[27]

Gandhi was once asked if he believed in the verse of the Sermon on the Mount, 'If any man would take your coat, let him have your cloak as well'. He answered: 'In the verse quoted by you Jesus put in a picturesque and telling manner the great doctrine of nonviolent non-cooperation. Your non-cooperation with your opponent is violent when you give a blow for a blow, and is ineffective in the long run. Your non-cooperation is nonviolent when you give your opponent all in place of just what he needs. You have disarmed him once for all by your apparent cooperation, which in effect is complete non-cooperation.'[28]

Gandhi and his followers disarmed India's oppressors by deliberately offering their bodies and their lives to the British, thus resisting them in spirit and in truth. The scene which took place at the Dharasana salt works was repeated in hundreds of similar incidents across India as the people became aware of the strength of suffering love embodied in nonviolence.[29] As Indian casualties rose, British seif-justification fell. Louis Fischer, Gandhi's biographer, has described this process succinctly: 'The British beat the Indians with batons and rifle butts. The Indians neither cringed nor complained nor retreated. That made England powerless and India invincible.'[30] India's assumption of power came through blood and crucifixion, not because the British were particularly kind-hearted. It may be true that a different imperialist power, whether communist as in Hungary or capitalist as in Vietnam, would have raised the cost

27. From an account published in *Young India* on May 29, 1930, quoted by Sharp, p. 145.
28. *What Jesus Means to Me*, p. 39.
29. 'Despite the repression by the Government, the people displayed a remarkable degree of self-restraint and nonviolent discipline. Eventually the matter of lathi charges rose somewhere in the hundreds. Then the Government took to firing on unarmed crowds, and during the compaign hundreds were killed and thousands were wounded in this manner.' Sharp, p. 179.
30. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (Collier Books: 1962), p. 279.

in suffering even higher in an effort to hold off India's independence. But to those who witnessed scenes such as the above, the British seemed brutal enough during their years of oppression to make the confrontation between armed might and the power of suffering love a genuine one. In any event, Gandhi's faith in nonviolent resistance was realistic enough not to rest on the presumably civilized sensibilities of the opponent and the hope of an early victory. In his letter of 1930 to the Viceroy announcing the beginning of the civil disobedience campaign which was to continue, with intermittent truces, for seventeen years, Gandhi rooted his nonviolent faith in voluntary suffering without limit: 'According to the science of satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by its victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremest character, voluntarily undergone.'[31]

The logic of nonviolence is the logic of crucifixion and leads the man of nonviolence into the heart of the suffering Christ. The purpose of nonviolence is to move the oppressors to perceive as human beings those whom they are oppressing. Men commit acts of violence and injustice against other men only to the extent that they do not regard them as fully human. Nonviolent resistance seeks to persuade the aggressor to recognize in his victim the humanity they have in common, which when recognized fully makes violence impossible. This goal of human recognition is sought through the power of voluntary suffering, by which the victim becomes no longer a victim but instead an active opponent in loving resistance to the man who has refused to recognize him as man. The man of nonviolence acts through suffering love to move the unjust opponent to a perception of their common humanity, and thus to the cessation of violence in the commencement of brotherhood. The greater the repression, the greater must be the suffering courted by its victims; the greater the inhumanity, the greater the power of suffering love necessary to begin restoring the bonds of community.

31. Quoted by Sharp, p. 117.

Suffering as such is powerless. Love transforms it into the kind of resistance capable of moving an opponent to the act of mutual recognition we have described. The suffering of his victim must be acknowledged by the oppressor as being human before he will cease inflicting it, and it is the love manifested in that suffering undergone openly and voluntarily which will bring him finally to this acknowledgment.[32]

We can understand then why Gandhi looked to Christ as the supereme example of nonviolence: at the cross suffering love received its fullest expression, even in the eyes of him who could not affirm Christ as uniquely divine. Gandhi knew that the man who died on Golgotha understood his entire life and mission as pointing toward that voluntary end, yet regarded that end, in spite of its outward character, not as futility but as complete fulfilment. The man fixed on the cross was self-defined in terms of suffering servanthood. Jesus of Nazareth had no other purpose in life than the cross of suffering love, which is to say: he had no other purpose in life than life itself.

But for the believer, the inner dynamic of redemption can also be understood in terms of nonviolence. If it is the purpose of nonviolence to move men by suffering love to a recognition of their common humanity, it is the purpose of the cross to move us in the same way to a recognition of all men in Christ. The cross moves us, first of all, to an acknowledgment of Jesus' own suffering humanity. In order to profess a faith in Christ, as Peter and the disciples learned, we must profess him first in the scandal of suffering and rejection which summarizes his humanity. But to identify oneself in faith with the Christ of the cross is to acknowledge that here is the ultimate self-disclosure of God in man, in the action of suffering love unto death and in the words of Christ embracing all men, victims and executioners alike (for with respect to one another and to Christ, all men are both, and Jesus spoke of all): 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' With these words and with the cross em-

32. A good description of this process from the standpoint of a sociologist can be found in the pamphlet, *Non-Violent Action: How it Works*, by George Lakey (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 129).

bodying them, Jesus revealed so profound a union between himself and mankind that the crucifixion cannot be seen in isolation from a single injustice in history, nor can it be separated from the personal confrontation of victim and executioner in any single injustice. By the crucifixion violence and injustice have everywhere become crucial, cross-centred.

In inflicting violence on one another, men know not what they do, for they know not the sacredness of their brothers' and their own humanity, which at its innermost core is one with the humanity of Christ. The violence of men at any place or time in history is the violence of Golgotha. And the victim, yet by his infinite love no longer victim but redeemer, is everywhere and always the same: the man of the cross. To recognize the humanity of the Christ of the cross is to recognize all men in him, who in his suffering is one with all those by whom he has been murdered. To pass over to the suffering servanthood of the man Jesus is to see, through his forgiveness, his redeeming presence in all men, oppressed and oppressors alike, and to see therefore the possibility of his redeeming mediation through suffering love of any human conflict. To profess a living faith in the Christ of the cross is to affirm the redemptive reality present in every cross of suffering love enacted in history. Christ becomes present everywhere as he was present: in suffering servanthood and crucifixion. In and through this presence he redeems mankind from division and leads it into community.

In thus interpreting the cross from the standpoint of belief, we can again confirm that interpretation best, by returning to the witness of one who made no claim to Christian belief. When India finally gained its independence from England in 1947, the Father of India could take no part in the victory celebrations. The partition of India and the creation of Pakistan had been accepted, against Gandhi's plea for unity, as the necessary condition for independence and had intensified a Hindu-Moslim conflict which threatened to inflame both countries. Against the rise of mass violence independence was an empty victory. Instead of celebrating it with the nation, the 78-year-old Gandhi went to Calcutta, 'into a Moslem house in an area where the stones

were slippery with fresh blood and the air acrid with the smoke of burning homes',[33] and there he undertook a fast unto death. His fast would end only if and when sanity returned to Calcutta. Dr. Amiya Chakravarty has described the fast and its effects:

> To most Indians, as to people outside, Gandhi's decision to fast as a means of changing an acute situation of social or political impasse, seemed remote, irrelevant and based on individual habit and unreason. And yet the challenge was clear; right in the heart of a brutal communal upheaval in Calcutta, resting in a broken house exposed to streets where fighting was going on, Gandhiji had chosen to impose self-suffering and penance upon his aged body, as well as on his mind, which he had put to the test of fire. Everyone knew that within a day or two the sheer physical agony mounted to an hourly and momently torture which nothing could relieve; toxic processes and tissue destruction would begin, not only bringing death nearer but setting up an intolerable psycho-physical sequence. His face and eyes, made luminous by suffering, and controlled suffering would show little trace of the agony that his will had mastered, but the nature of his ordeal was unmistakable to the millions. Even while repudiating his method and its efficacy, the one question in people's minds would be, 'How is Gandhiji?' People would begin to feel unconfortable: the grocer's boy, the rickshaw-puller, the office clerk, the school and college students would scan the news columns early in the morning and listen to the radio throughout the day and feel more personally involved in the situation. I remember how university students would come up to us and ask to be excused from attending their classes because they felt disturbed and did not know what to do. But why feel disturbed? They would say that though they did not believe in such methods and in the philosophy behind it all, one thing struck them as curious; after all if anybody had to suffer for the continued killing and betrayal in the city, it was not Gandhiji. He had taken no part in it. So, while others were engaged in crime, it was he who

33. Fischer, p. 472.

> had to suffer like this. They felt awkward and some wanted to stop his suffering, and even gathered together weapons from streets and homes at great personal risk; they wanted to return them to Gandhiji.
>
> As we know, Gandhiji would look at groups who came with steel guns and knives and now offered these in return for his promise to break the fast and ask them, 'Why?' Why should it matter to them whether one more man, a man of seventy-eight, suffered or died when they had easily allowed hundreds of innocents to suffer and die? If all the agony and shame had not mattered, why should one more individual signify at all in a situation of retaliation, vengeance and crime that they had accepted as being moral and courageous? So it was to save him, Gandhiji, that they had come; but the saving of Gandhiji, or not saving him, was not the point at all.
>
> So the fast would continue. Men would come back from their offices in the evening and find food prepared by their family, ready for them; but soon it would be revealed that the women of the home had not eaten during the whole day. They had not felt hungry. Pressed further, the wife or mother would admit that she could not understand how they could go on when Gandhiji was dying for their own crimes. Restaurants and amusement centres did little business; some of them were voluntarily closed by their proprietors. Why this total and pervasive suffering for a whole city? Why did it all begin to matter? The nerve of feeling had been restored, the pain began to be felt; the pain of the whole society, because of the pain of its members, whether Hindu, Muslim or others. Gandhiji knew when to start the redemptive process. Involvement did not merely mean pain: it was fundamentally the joy of union, and the acceptance of new responsibility which such glad assurance of united strength makes possible. An immense release filled the atmosphere when Gandhiji declared that now we had all suffered and shared, his fast would be broken. Release turned into rejoicing, the fast actually led up in feasts in which the warring communities joined heartily, while Gandhiji sipped his small glass of orange juice.

One would like to carry the story further; but the meaning of his fast was clear. Suffering was happening in a social and moral vacuum, with no response from peoples whose minds had lost all human sensitiveness. It could only be reciprocated and then redeemed by the process of suffering. Then out of sharing and involvement would arise a new situation; it would not be merely change but transformation.[34]

The transformation which Gandhi sought and was given through the cross is the transformation spoken of by the angel at the open tomb: 'He is not here; for he has risen.' Or more pointedly in Luke, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?' The cross raises the dead to the living because the cross itself is living, as Gandhi described and followed it. For Gandhi dared not think of birth without death on the cross. He also said, '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.'[35] To the suffering servant, resurrection is as present a reality as crucifixion, although present only in and through the cross. Only in yielding up one's spirit, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit', is there granted the power to roll back the rock so that the dead can become the living. Only in suffering love unto death is a Calcutta reclaimed from the valley of the dead. Only through the servant's gift of life in the darkness of death can the violent be returned to life, for it was after Jesus' death that the centurion and those who assisted him in that death confessed, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

Does not a full commitment to Jesus' humanity of suffering servanthood necessarily involve an existential commitment to the overcoming truth of his divinity as well? To answer yes, with particular reference to Gandhi's witness, is not to claim Gandhi for Christianity, but to claim to see the full meaning of Christ in Gandhi, in a living cross and resurrection which would be true to Gandhi's own understanding of what it means to live

34. Amiya Chakravarty, *A Saint at Work: A View of Gandhi's Work and Message* (The Young Friends Movement of the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings: 1950), pp. 23 ff., quoted by Sharp, pp. 258-60.
35. *The Message of Jesus Christ*, pp. 37-38.

and to die. The cross is revolutionary not simply because it raises men to another life but because it transforms them into the fulness of that life on this earth. The revolution of peace is realized in Calcutta, not heaven, because only the wounded flesh and spilled blood of Calcutta can provide the matter of a new heaven and a new earth. The spirit of a new earth must also be in Calcutta, as it was in the Christic figure suffering into love the violence of the city, and in the community thus re-created.

Because he envisioned the face of God as Truth, Gandhi experimented with truth in a lifelong struggle to see God face to face. In the course of that struggle, which became in part the struggle of India and finally the British Empire and the world, Gandhi encountered God as suffering love. In realizing through his experiments that the God of Truth is found through the God of suffering love, Gandhi passed into the redeeming truth of the Incarnation.

Gandhi and the Student Unrest in India

EDITORIAL

We are living in a troubled world. There is no country in the world today which is living a peaceful and quiet life. There is ferment everywhere—in politics, in the field of economic adjustments and particularly in the realm of human ethics. Many old values are crashing visibly before our eyes. We may be sad about it, but we must acknowledge that these values which we have cherished for so long are crashing; and we must be prepared for revolutions in thought and action in every sphere of our lives. If we are afraid of change, change will push us away. The last two world wars have left a debris from which we have not extricated ourselves yet; particularly from the kind of cruel cynicism which has emerged from the second world war. It looks as though nothing can today rouse the human conscience adequately. We seem to be willing to accept impossible things and to live with these without reacting vigorously. We saw something of what happened in Korea, for instance. We see something of what is happening in Vietnam today. We know the situation between India and Pakistan. They produce some excitement here and there, but these terrible human tragedies of our time leave us pretty cold. In this twentieth century we seem to be willing to live the life of the 18th or the 19th century—which is a dreadful thing to do. We can sometimes live beyond our time, but we can also live behind our times and make of ourselves just dead human beings, without the pulsing for new things and the aching for a new adventure of life. This is one of the greatest of the tragedies we are confronting today.

Against this background, I am not too worried about this problem of student unrest in India. I do not look upon it as a great catastrophe that has overtaken the nation. Let us try to remember something of the role that students have played

throughout history. In every country in the world, at some time or the other, students have obtruded into public life vigorously. Whenever in a nation or among a people, every other section has been beaten and suppressed, the students have remained unsuppressed and unbeaten. You have seen this in revolution after revolution in the world. You have seen this, for instance, in Turkey when that country liberated itself. The term Young Turk became almost a kind of by-word in international parlance. You have seen this in Egypt. You have seen this in Ireland. You have seen this in India under Gandhi. You have recently seen it in Indonesia, where the students toppled a government and brought a new government into power. Every other section was pushed back but the students could not be suppressed, because there is in them a certain recklessness of courage which I consider a very valuable asset to any nation at any time—the recklessness which belongs to youth and students. We must therefore not look upon the student community as a prospective danger or nuisance to anybody. The youth of a country—and particularly the students who are the educated and enlightened youth of a country —are its greatest asset and if something goes wrong with them or we deal with them in the wrong way, we destroy the foundations of the life of a nation. So the role of the students must not be forgotten and we must take a positive approach and look upon students as potential allies in every great adventure we wish to take in our country. The Indian students are as good as students in any other country in the world—generous and willing to respond to a call. If we can handle them, touch them, mould them properly there is no achievement which is beyond their reach. I have spent a whole lifetime among students and I am proud of them. Because of some things that have happened in the country, I am not going to say that I am ashamed of the Indian students. I particularly remember my own days as a young student when Gandhi appeared on the scene. Now there is a myth—I have heard it in Parliament and elsewhere—that all these student troubles have come from Gandhi. It was he who called out the students, they say; it was he who threw them into politics and for all the indisciplines of today there is but one cause—

Mahatma Gandhi. I challenged this allegation on the floor of Parliament. I said there is no greater myth than this. True, Gandhi called out students for the freedom of India from foreign subjection. But he laid down imperative conditions when students came out to join the struggle. A student had to become a disciplined soldier under Gandhi. It was not easy to work under Gandhi. It is easy to work under many leaders today; you can get away with anything. But no student could get away with Gandhi. Immediately you came into his tent he prescribed a rigorous discipline; and from the next morning you had to adopt that discipline or leave Gandhi. He called us out for national liberation and said, 'Once you come out of school or college you no more go back to it; you are involved for life in the struggle for freedom.' Surely this is very different from creating student indiscipline. Gandhi not only put us through the gamut of discipline from the very first day; he placed in front of us objectives which we had to realize for ourselves and for the community, hard taks which had to be accomplished from day to day. Gandhi disciplined the youth and students of this country as no other man in the history of India, and if even today there are some remnants of discipline in this country upon which we can bank, they are those which came from Gandhi.

We have reached a stage when we cannot easily contain our students. We cannot contain them within the traditional things. We cannot contain them within old ideas and programs. Youth is continually itching to advance and even when we give them old ideas, these ideas need to be readjusted to the dynamics of today, otherwise they will not look at them. The politicians in power in India—and I speak with a little hesitation because many of them are my friends—are no longer revolutionaries in this country. They have obtained the image of power and they want to stabilise and conserve it. This was true even of Pandit Nehru. I knew him in the days he was a revolutionary in the Congress and I knew him in the later days when he struck me as a fine conservative.

How can we bring education closer to the soil of India, to the soul of India, to the realities of India? Talk about realities! The

grasp of Indian realities in our Universities is almost zero. They live in a world of their own, and in a culture alien to Indian culture. It is into that kind of a system that our students are plunged today. What a terrific cost to the Indian taxpayer is the present system of education which ends by manufacturing hundreds of thousands of aliens in their own country, mentally cut away from the roots of their culture! You go to any country in the world and you meet people who are proud of their culture, of their music, of their poets, of their dramatists, of their architecture, of their painters, of everything that makes up the sum total of culture including moral influences. Ask an Indian university student what he is proud of in India. Hardly anything! He dresses in the latest Western style and he walks about an alien in his own country. Mentally he is even more alienated from his people.

Now there is this crucial point we often debate: can students take part in politics? I would like to see the man or woman who is going to prevent students from taking part in politics. Speaking for myself, I insist that it is the birthright of a student not only to understand, study and discuss politics but also to participate in politics—but on two imperative Gandhian conditions. First, that when he acts he acts nonviolently; and secondly, that he acts in a constructive manner in politics. Breaking a window, burning a bus or throwing stones is not student agitation, but pure and simple rowdyism. Such rowdyism will be put down in any country by methods by which alone rowdyism can be put down unless it is a nonviolent state. The students must be free, and more than being free encouraged, to study politics systematically, so that they get to understand what the different political parties are saying; and I am sure, if our students understand politics properly they will not become the easy prey that they are today of every political charlatan who approaches them.

Let our students discuss party programs in the university campus. Let teachers and professors take an interest and sit with them while the discussion is on and try to see that the discussion gets along in the right way. If a student neglects his

studies and plays about with active party politics, he is ruined educationally. There is a punishment inherent in his misconduct. We must make this very clear to the student: that nobody but he himself will be the loser; and I think our students are intelligent enough to understand a thing like this if it is properly put to them. But if they run amuck and become violent, then the law looks after them. I have heard it said—and I am sorry it is being said—that when this happens, the student is just like any other criminal and would be punished exactly like any other criminal. I say, no. Give a small margin of consideration to the fact that he is a young fellow, a student, and that he is not doing this for any selfish purpose. Even the British gave us this grace when we fought them for the freedom of India. They would always treat the political agitator a little differently from the criminal. Are we not going to give that little margin of consideration and generosity to our own students?

Today leadership is not so much in an individual. It happens once in several centuries that there is some individual of such great consequence that he becomes a true leader. I think that time is passing away from this country. You had Gandhi, you had Nehru. There is no one taking that place today; no one of that stature. Now we must not depend upon individual leadership. We must trust more to ideas. We must trust more to the understanding of problems and the leadership of ideas in the solution of problems We say we are advancing towards socialism in this country. After Gandhi's great goal of national independence the new goal is democratic socialism within the country. Now I am in Parliament; I know what is happening; I know what people are talking. I tell you, Indian socialism has become spineless, colourless, with very little substance in it and it is not giving a call to our young people to act in terms of real socialism under the Indian sky.

Apart from the fact that there is nothing which we give our students to inspire them, to galvanize them into high action, into dedication, apart from all that, the parent is ceasing to pull his weight in India. I remember, in some of the towns in South India we approached the parents from house to house; they said,

we can do nothing with our boys. If we talk to them more than once, they don't come home for food. If we talk to them a third time, they don't come home for the night. The parent is no longer pulling his weight. This is so throughout the world. I was recently in Germany and I saw at an airport a number of young fellows sitting and having tea. With my German friend I walked up to them and said, may I join your tea? They looked at me and my Gandhi cap and said, sit down. Then I talked to them. In a few minutes they gave out their mind. 'There is nothing common,' they said, 'between us and the older generation. Twice they betrayed us to war and destruction. We are not going to trust our elders any more. We are going to take life into our own hands.'

It is no longer possible to inspire our students by talking the same old language, by walking in the same old ruts. We must give them an enlarged horizon to which they can look up. We must give them new challenges consistent with the revolutionary changes of the twentieth century, and in my opinion, the greatest challenge of this century is the cause of world peace. You go to any university and ask the graduates what they know about the situation concerning nuclear warfare in the world. They have heard about the atom bomb: China has it, they say, so we must have it too. This is the kind of thing everywhere. What a tragedy, what a misunderstanding of the situation regarding world peace! As I have said often, we are like sparrows, building our nests in the crater of a volcano. You may build your nests very nicely, you may feed each other, you may make love to each other in the nest; but one day when the eruption takes place, all the nests will disappear in smoke and ashes. We are at that stage in the world today. Let us give our students an understanding of this situation regarding war and peace. Let our students get a sense of mission about war and peace, about the danger threatening mankind.

When you have done everything you can, plugged all the holes of indiscipline, of unhappiness, everything you can do as a state, as a people and a government and society, there will still be a margin of restlessness, a margin of ferment in the mind of the

students and youth. We must not be afraid of that. When having done everything we can to build up the student in a new way and to give him a new vision, a new purpose and a new life altogether, we still find in him a little margin of ferment and dissatisfaction, that is the best thing we can have in this world. It is in that margin that greatness lives. We must not be afraid of that. We must learn to live with that, and look upon it as a great asset and not as a danger or a nuisance.

G. RAMACHANDRAN

Violence and Nonviolence: A New Look at an Old Debate

EDITORIAL

Among the variety of crimes with which independent India has been charged, both by her own accusers and by critics from across the seas, nothing is more perplexing than the allegation that she has totally betrayed Gandhi. Most of the people who make this allegation have in mind the country's progressive discarding of one or the other of the various facets of the gandhian program of social reconstruction. But some accuse India of a more fundamental error—her consistent failure to uphold nonviolence both as a state policy and at the level of social action. It is with this latter charge that we shall concern ourselves in this brief essay.

It has more or less become a dogma, among students of gandhian thought, to assume that violence and nonviolence are opposites which cancel each other out. They have tended to look upon the world of reality in terms of black and white, forgetful of the infinite nuances of grey that confront us at every turn. Life is not what these well-meaning people have assumed it to be—a clear-cut progression from the infra-red of brute violence to the ultra-violet of ethereal nonviolence. Life is rather like a close-knit web, in which violence and nonviolence interpenetrate one another, not as contradictory elements but as complementaries. This interpenetration of seeming opposites—good and evil, light and darkness, life and death, violence and nonviolence —is the essence of reality. We ignore it at our own peril.

Gandhi, being the 'practical idealist' that he was, always spoke of truth-and-nonviolence, never of nonviolence alone. Within the meaning of his 'practical idealism', the practice of nonviolence became, in other words, an exercise in the art of the possible.

Nonviolence and truth were one interpenetrated whole—a mosaic in which each patch of colour lent meaning to the other. Gandhi never spoke of nonviolence in the abstract but only as it related to some concrete situation. Of course, like all human beings, he did at times, especially in his later years, indulge in the luxury of generalizing from particular events. But as a rule his awareness of reality, painfully acute at all times, tended to overmaster the natural human gravitation towards romanticism.

Much of the misunderstanding of Gandhi, which in turn leads to the widespread suspicion of India's betrayal of Gandhi, arises from our failure to comprehend the meaning of his paradoxical concept of 'practical idealism'. Partly this failure can be traced —romantics as we all are—to our natural estrangement with the element of earthly compromise that the paradox implies. We are repelled by the suggestion that our idealism must needs be toned down in terms of what is practical in real life. In this we forget that even so uncompromising a metaphysician as Sankaracharya had perforce to mellow his non-dualism with the dualistic admission of two levels of reality—the vyavaharika (the relational) and the paramarthika (the non-relational). Gandhi did no less, and no more, when he insisted that his idealism was a practical one.

Gandhi was never tired of saying that his whole life has been a series of compromises. Though he undoubtedly regretted this—as who wouldn't?—nevertheless it was not his way to let himself be consumed with remorse and frustration on that account. All life is a compromise. Human perceptions, no less than human sensations, are subjected to the law of dvandva—or what may be called the hot-cold, good-bad syndrome. Violence and nonviolence are no exception to this rule. Pure nonviolence, as much as pure violence, is an impossible stance for human beings and human institutions. Neither would exist for a second on such a diet. The kind of permanent, enduring peace that man has been seeking since the dawn of creation is a will-o'-the-wisp. War and peace, conflict and reconciliation, are two aspects of the ongoing human process of social, political and psychological evolution. The evolution is not, as it is commonly misperceived, from war

towards peace, but rather from one kind of war and peace towards another kind of war and peace. It is a relative, not an absolute evolution.

Perhaps this point needs to be amplified somewhat, to forestall any suspicion of casuistry on our part. That forms of warfare 'evolve' (in the primary sense of that word) is nowhere more apparent than in the nature of modern nuclear war itself. No nation, unless it is quite mad, prepares for a nuclear war in order to fight it. but rather in order to ensure that such a war will never take place. This is the essence of the modern concept of nuclear deterrence which, whether we like it or not, continues to preserve the world, despite endless provocations, from the horrors of a third world war. While our ancestors sharpened their swords in order to use them at the first opportunity, whether for defence or depredation, we pile up our bombs in order never to have to use them. The evolution is from secrecy to openness on the one hand, and from the Janus-faced concept of defence and attack to that of deterrence on the other. It is, of course, not an evolution from war to peace; for nuclear deterrence has only prevented a world war, but not the dozen or more 'theatre' wars that have taken place since Hiroshima.

The nature of these 'theatre' wars (as the expressive American phrase goes) will shed much light on the kind of world in which independent India is having to fend for itself, with or without violence. General Beaufre speaks of four general types, on an ascending scale of military intensity: (1) cold war not including guerilla warfare; (2) cold war including guerilla warfare; (3) semi-hot war; and (4) limited conventional war, Wherever these wars have occurred, whether in the Congo, Algeria, Angola, Middle East, Cuba, Laos, Vietnam, Yemen or in the Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistan skirmishes, they have been invariably outside the operative zone of the US-USSR nuclear deterrent. In the coming years, such 'theatre' wars are likely to increase rather than decrease, since being marginal they have little chance, despite popular mythology, of escalating into a paroxysmal confrontation between the nuclear giants, The evolution, it will be seen, is from one kind of peace, the uneasy peace that prevailed bet-

ween the first and second world wars, to the new kind of nuclear peace in which small wars are as common as mushrooms in summer but which, nevertheless, effectively prevents (postpones, if you will) a world catastrophe.

Gandhi lived well into the dawn of the nuclear age. He also lived through the Nazi tyranny. But faced with these bizarre happenings he fell into the generalizations that all great men resort to at times of stress and dismay. For once he let go of his hold on truth and unconvincingly argued that nonviolence still was the answer both to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. It is more than probable that Gandhi, had he lived long into our nightmare age of the Chines Red Guard, the Viet Cong and the genocidal American bombing of Vietnam, would have characteristically owned his error and shown us where and how our doctrinal moorings had to be readjusted. But in his absence, it devolves on us who claim to be working towards the revolution he left unfinished, to make those necessary readjustments.

If, on the other hand, we continue to look upon nonviolence as an absolute concept, not subject to the exigencies of history or to the evolutionary, trial-and-error nature of all human ideas, we thereby achieve only what each one of the great religions has achieved in the past—a progressive fossilization. Doctrinal purity is a meaningless obsession when our aim is to achieve certain well-defined social and political goals. In this the followers of Gandhi—at any rate most of them—are different from Gandhi in a very vital sense, though few dare to admit the difference. With Gandhi—a saint to the manner born—the achievement of the secular goals of political freedom and social justice was always subservient to the religious goal of moksha, or self-realization. If the former had come in the way of the latter and had proved an obstacle in the path of his well-set spiritual journey (which they fortunately did not), Gandhi would have had little hesitation in discarding them. For him, therefore, nonviolence became—in consonance with Hindu tradition—both the means as well as the end. This can hardly be said to be the case with the bulk of present-day gandhians.

The spiritual overtone in gandhian nonviolence, exceedingly

important though it is when nonviolence is practised primarily for spiritual ends and only secondarily for the achievement of the secular goal of social change, nevertheless has led to certain inner compulsions which have reduced its acceptability to modern societies. This is unfortunate, for the importance of the gandhian orientation lies precisely in the successful manner in which he showed how the heavenly Ganga of nonviolence can be brought down to earth and tamed for worldly ends. Among these inner compulsions, probably the most serious was the need he felt (no doubt genuinely) to make sweeping generalizations about nonviolence and, in the process, to ignore the essentially finite nature of all human instruments. This factor of finiteness cannot be too strongly emphasized.

Thus it is that we see the widespread erosion of nonviolence in various parts of the world where once, even if as a brief flicker, it held so much promise. Much of this erosion is still imperceptible on account of the effective ways in which the irrepressibly eloquent 'peace groups' (now, alas, a dwindling minority) make use of modern high-tension communication media. But it will be a dangerous delusion to imagine that the erosion is not real or that it is temporary.

How can we halt this erosion? In other words, how shall we complete the revolution that Gandhi began but left unfinished? Or, if that sounds a trifle grandiose, how shall we continue the social and political process that Gandhi set in motion with such exemplary initial success but which, for one reason or another, showed signs of weakening towards the end? To face up to this challenge, it is not enough merely to go back to Gandhi but rather, following the example of Vinoba, we should blaze new trails. For purism is a poor answer to a dynamically changing human situation. To say, as we often do, that the failure of nonviolence is actually our own failure or that the fault is not with the principle but with its practice is to evade the real issue and to turn our backs on truth—which, even in gandhian terms, is a gross violation of first principles.

If nonviolence is falling back, it is because (to put it bluntly) we expected too much of nonviolence. For far too long we

have nursed a misconception of the role of nonviolence in human evolution. We assumed that the function of nonviolence is eventually to outwit and displace violence from human society. In a way we had committed the 'naturalistic fallacy' of confusing what is desirable with what is possible. Our first duty, therefore, is to put nonviolence where it rightly belongs—among the finite human instruments of social change. The evolutionary function of nonviolence will then be seen to be, not to eradicate violence from human society but to reduce its incidence on a progressively mounting scale. But it is an infinite progression, somewhat like Zeno's celebrated conundrum, so that however much we may toil and moil a certain amount of residual violence will always be a part of human society.

Our intention in going into these niceties is not to indulge in a vain philosophical digression but to show that the erosion of nonviolence can be stopped only if, contrary to all prevalent notions, we begin to look upon it not as an alternative to violence but as a corrective and a complement to the latter. This would mean, among other things, that we admit that violence, far from being outmoded, has still a useful role to play in human evolution. Doubtless it is an increasingly expensive and wasteful role, but we dare not forget that the costs of a static society are even more wasteful and, in the long run, even more expensive.

The so-called 'betrayal' of Gandhi by India—both by the state and by the people—is thus in actuality nothing more than an involuntary conceptual realignment brought about by the exigencies of a fast changing world. Traditional nonviolence, we must confess, has no adequate answer either to the nuclear threat or to modern totalitarianism or even to the subtler forms of political erosion, such as are exemplified in guerilla warfare or the Chinese Red Guards. To say this is, we believe, to perform one of the primary duties of a gandhian—the duty of fearless allegiance to truth. But having accepted the inadequacies or limitations of nonviolence, one should not stop there but go forward and make those voluntary conceptual realignments which will regain for it the important and necessary, if limited, role that it has to continue to play in the social and political evolu-

tion of man. For if nonviolence is insufficient, so in a more excruciating degree is violence.

The coming of nuclear weapons has brought about the unexpected materialization of an ancient truth—that nothing welds a people more quickly together than the imminence of common disaster. It is puerile to argue that such unity never lasts. Nothing at all is permanent or lasting in human society. The search for durable solutions is a throw-back to the ancient Indian quest for amrita. Whether permanent or transient, we do no service to the human race by ridiculing the comparative, but on all accounts stable, peace that the fear of atomic annihilation has brought about. Maybe the peace would have been more to our liking if it had its roots in fraternity rather than in fear. But that is largely a matter of taste.

But international peace, even of the kind that we have today, is not so much an end in itself as a means to the other great ends of human evolution. What is true of peace is true of nonviolence. The great danger is that we are forgetting these ends and reducing ourselves progressively to a vegetable existence. The means may, and do, vary from age to age, but the ends do not. In this, as in much else, probably the path of wisdom lies in what the Buddha called 'the middle way'.

The task of the gandhian minority in India is thus essentially a corrective one at the present uneasy stage of the country's development. But it would be a serious delusion if we imagine that the corrective process has only an objective function to fulfil. It has a much more urgent subjective function—and the sooner we realize it the better.

T. K. MAHADEVAN

Buber and Gandhi

AVNER FALK

Martin Buber is one of the most important living philosophers and spiritual guides. His philosophical and anthropological insight into the psychical problems of interpersonal relationships, and of the human situation, has profoundly influenced some of the greatest thinkers, religious leaders, psychologists, anthropologists, and even political leaders, of our time, and left a deep mark on the development and behaviour of young and old in times of personal, social or political crisis. His profound and highly original sociological and psychological philosophy is far from being 'Strictly Jewish', and in fact, had been known to Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals long before it was published in Hebrew (Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1959) and made known to the Israeli reader. Buber's dialogic thinking is a landmark in the history of philosophy, and of human evolution in general.

Politically and socially, on the mass scale, he is rather a lonely prophet. His small political group in Israel 'The Bond (Ihud)', devoted to Jewish-Arab rapprochement and peace, is insignificant in terms of Israeli politics, and its monthly, *Ner* (Candle), is read by a very small group of Jews and Arabs. Yet Buber often participates in petitions and statements addressed to the Government at times of important decisions (as in the Eichmann case, the debate on military government for the Arabs, issues of nuclear disarmament, etc.) and unwaveringly maintains his standpoint against the vast majority.

The present article has as its subject Buber's letter to Gandhi on the Jewish problems in the late 'thirties, when Jews were being transported to concentration camps in Germany on a monstrous and hitherto unheard-of scale, while those Jews who had managed to immigrate to Palestine, despite British regulations and many other obstacles, were involved in a severe conflict

with the Arab community and with the British colonial-mandatory government. This situation, considered in the light of the weird and painful history of the Jewish people on the one hand, and of Arab national history, British rule, and Hitler's Germany, on the other was as complex as it was hideous.

Buber was one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine at that time, and professor of philosophy and sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His *I and Thou* and *On Dialogue* had been published in German (in Germany) and he had completed a German translation of the Hebrew Bible (with Franz Rosenzweig). His humanistic political outlook was definitely not 'pacifist', yet he desired peace no less than any ardent pacifist, and at the same time was witnessing one of the worst catastrophes in the history of his people.

Buber and his colleague at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, J.L. Magnes, then read Gandhi's statement in *Harijan* of 26 November 1938. referring to the Jewish question. As this first long and significant statement may be inaccessible to many readers, it is worth while quoting some of its most important passages here, in full. It can be found in References 1 and 2.

'Several letters have been received by me asking me to declare my views about the Arab-Jew question in Palestine and the persecution of Jews in Germany. It is not without hesitation that I venture to offer my views on this very difficult question.

'My sympathies are all with the Jews . . . I came to learn much of their age-long persecution . . . The parallel between their treatment by Christians and the treatment of untouchables by Hindus is very close. . . .But my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. Their cry for the National Home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after a return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they were born and where they earn their livelihood?

'Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English, or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is

going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. . . .Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs, so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their National Home.

'The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French. If the Jews have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or do they want a double home where they can remain at will? This cry for a National Home affords a colourable justification for the German expulsion of the Jews.

'But the German persecution of Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hilter seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. . . . The crime of an obviously mad but intrepid youth is being visited upon his whole race with unbelievable ferocity. If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of, and for, humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of the pros and cons of such a war is therefore outside my horizon or province.

'. . . Can the Jews resist this organised and shameless persecution? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn? I submit there is. . . . If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or submit to dicriminating treatment. . . . Suffering voluntarily undergone would bring them (the Jews) an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can.

'. . .It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian satyagraha campaign in South Africa

an exact parallel. . . .The Jews of Germany can offer satyagraha under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa.

'. . . And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about it in the wrong way. Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their National Home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs. . . .They can offer satyagraha themselves in front of the Arabs and offer to be shot or thrown into the Dead Sea without raising a little finger against them. . . . As it is they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done them no wrong.

'. . . Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of nonviolence . . . . Every country is their home, including Palestine, not by aggression but by loving service.'

Before passing on to consider Buber's and Magnes's replies to this statement of Gandhi's, let us point out a few obvious errors and misconceptions in Gandhi's mental picture of the situation, both in Germany and in Palestine, as well as of the Jewish position among the nations in general. Some of the assertions in this article cannot but seem strange and unfounded to any Jew, whether a Satyagrahi or not. It is clear that Gandhi's psychological mistake lies not only in his relative unfamiliarity with Europen politics, but also in his instinctive comparison of the Jews with his own people, the Indians. No amount of violence and horror perpetrated on Indians in South Africa or in India can possibly be compared to what was being done at that time by the Nazis in concentration camps. 'I would refuse to be expelled or submit to discriminating treatment' must sound literally ridiculous to any ex-inmate of a Nazi camp, or to anyone who has ever had any dealings with Nazi institutions as a Jew. But it is not our purpose here to refute Gandhi's views and conceptions on this question. Our intention is to present the

views of the various people intimately connected with the issue at that time.

In *Harijan*, of 17 December 1938, Gandhi answered some of the questions raised by the earlier article. Some of them were naturally also raised by Buber and Magnes and we shall deal with them in detail. For the rest of Gandhi's statements on the Jewish question, the reader is referred to Reference 1.

Obviously, however, Gandhi had no immediate knowledge of the real issues. The atrocities of British colonialism and racial hatred and discrimination in India or South Africa could by no means give him an adequate idea of what was actually happening, in Nazi Germany and in Palestine, his only resources on this subject being letters, articles, documents, and the views and sentiments of some Jewish acquaintances in India and abroad. It was quite natural for him, therefore, to apply his universal nonviolent philosophy to this particular case—as he did with all political questions in Europe and elsewhere—and to issue his statements accordingly.

No one would pretend to take Gandhi's philosophy lightly, or to underestimate the mental discipline and effort which its practice requires in present-day society. Nor would anyone endeavour to reject Gandhi's standpoint as 'too simple' or 'unrealistic'. Undoubtedly Gandhi's words were a source of inspiration and spiritual guidance to the best religious and spiritual leaders of the time. As Orwell says, he 'enriched the world simply by being alive'. Yet Buber could not help seeing this matter differently. The questions of peace and nonviolence must have troubled him a good deal, but at the same time what was happening to his people in Germany, and the horrors he was foreseeing, made it impossible for him to accept Gandhi's statements wholeheartedly.

Gandhi's statement was read in Jerusalem by Martin Buber, and from November 1938 to February 1939 he was thinking of this most painful question of his own people and of humanity, and composing his letter to Gandhi.

'I have been very slow in writing this letter to you, Mahatma', Buber concludes his letter on 24 February 1939. 'I

made repeated pauses—sometimes days elapsing between short paragraphs—in order to test my knowledge and my way of thinking. Day and night I took myself to task, searching whether I had not in any one point overstepped the measure of self-preservation allotted, and even prescribed, by God to a human community, and whether I had not fallen into the grievous error of collective egoism. Friends and my own conscience have helped to keep me straight whenever danger threatened. Weeks have now passed since then and the time has come when negotiations are proceeding in the capital of the British Empire on the Jewish-Arab problem and when, it is said, a decision is to be made. But the true decision in this matter can only come from within and not from without.

'I take the liberty therefore of closing this letter to you without waiting for the result in London.'

Buber's standpoint in this letter is that of a sufferer speaking to 'a voice that he has long known and honoured, a great voice and an earnest one'. Buber feels that he is representing the dire suffering of his afflicted nation; that his letter to Gandhi is not personal, but a dialogue between two nations; and, prophet-like, he identifies himself with his people. 'What he (the sufferer) hears, containing though it does elements of a noble, and most praiseworthy conception such as he expects from this speaker, is yet barren of all application to his peculiar circumstances', says Buber. It seems that this is the cardinal point of this historical dialogue between two great men: Buber does not reject Gandhi's philosophy, conception or principles: yet he refuses to accept them blindly in any given circumstances. He demands that the particular circumstances of the case be discussed and considered, and the question be investigated as to whether Gandhi's prescription and philosophy are at all applicable here, 'The listener is aware that he, the speaker', writes Buber, 'has cast not a single glance at the situation of him whom he is addressing, that he sees him not, nor does he know him and the straits under which he labours'. This is a rather heavy counter-reproach: the humanist, the believer in dialogue, accuses Gandhi of having issued his statement and judgement without in the

least acquainting himself with the actual situation and plight of the Jews. Buber tells Gandhi that he has rashly applied his principles to a case he literally knew nothing about!

Let us now consider the various specific aspects of this case. It would be best to let Buber speak for himself.

'Jews are being persecuted, robbed, maltreated, tortured, murdered. And you, Mahatma Gandhi, say that their position in the country where they suffer all this is an exact parallel to the position of Indians in South Africa at the time when you inaugurated your famous "Force of Truth" or "Strength of the Soul" (satyagraha) campaign! There the Indians occupied precisely the same place and the persecution there also had a religious tinge. There also the constitution denied equality of rights to the white and to the black race including the Asiatics: there also the Indians were assigned to ghettos and the other disqualifications were, at all events, of the same type as those of the Jews in Germany. I read and reread these sentences in your article, without being able to understand. Although I know them well, I reread all your South African speeches and writings . . . and I did likewise with the accounts of your friends and pupils at that time; but all this did not help me to understand what you say about us. In . . . 1896 . . . a band of Europeans had set fire to an Indian village shop causing some damage; and . . . another band had thrown burning rockets into an urban shop. If I oppose to this the thousands on thousands of Jewish shops destroyed and burnt out, you will perhaps answer that the difference is only one of quantity. . . . But, Mahatma, are you not aware of the burning of Synagogues and scrolls of the Law? Do you know nothing of all the sacred property of the community —in part of great antiquity—that has been destroyed in the flames? I am not aware that Boers and Englishmen in South Africa ever injured anything sacred to the Indians. . . . Three Indian school teachers who were found walking in the streets after 9 p.m. contrary to orders, were arrested and only acquitted later on. That is the only incident of the kind that you bring forward. Now do you know, or do you not know, Mahatma, what a concentration camp is like and what goes on there? Do

you know of the torments in the concentration camp, of its methods of slow and quick slaughter? I cannot assume that you know of this; for then this tragi-comic utterance, "almost of the same type", could scarcely have crossed your lips! . . . And do you think perhaps that a Jew in Germany could pronounce in public one single sentence of a speech such as yours, without being knocked down? . . . An effective stand may be taken in the form of nonviolence against unfeeling human beings in the hope of gradually bringing them thereby to their senses. But a diabolic universal steam-roller cannot thus be withstood. A martyrdom cast to the wind—that is the fate of innumerable Jews in Germany.'

Buber now points to another fundamental difference between the Jews and the Indians which Gandhi had failed to understand.

'When you were in South Africa, Mahatma, . . . did you ask then, as you ask the Jews now, whether they (the Indians) want a double home where they can remain at will? You say to the Jews: if Palestine is your home, you must accustom yourselves to the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which you are settled. Did you also say to the Indians in South Africa that if India was their home, they must accustom themselves to the idea of being compelled to return to India? Or did you tell them that India was not their home? And if hundreds of millions of Indians were to be scattered tomorrow over the face of the earth; and if the day after tomorrow another nation were to establish itself in India and the Jews were to declare that there was yet room for the establishment of a national home for the Indians, thus giving to their diaspora a strong organic concentration and a living centre; should then a Jewish Gandhi—assuming there could be such—answer them, as you answered the Jews: this cry for the national home affords a colourable justification for your expulsion? Or should he teach them, as you teach the Jews: the India of your Vedic conception is not a geographical tract, it is in your hearts?'

Buber's method is clear. He tries to make Gandhi see his misunderstanding through drawing the obvious (though obviously absurd) parallel between the two nations. The reader will ponder

or himself what Gandhi may have replied to these words—either inwardly or openly. To the best of my knowledge, no official publication has been issued of Gandhi's reply, if any.

Buber then goes on to describe the peculiar and unique situation of the Jews among the nations during the last three thousand years or so. Quoting from the Hebrew Bible and dwelling on various aspects of Jewish religion and culture, he tries to make Gandhi get a glimpse into some of the specific problems involved, which he has failed to notice.

Here we come to an interesting paragraph in Buber's letter.

'Now you may well ask whether I speak for the Jewish people when I say "we". I speak only for those who feel themselves entrusted with the commission of fulfilling the commandment of justice delivered to Israel of the Bible. . . . In this connexion I must tell you that you are mistaken when you assume that in general the Jews of today believe in God and derive from their faith guidance for their conduct. Jewry of today is in the throes of a serious *crisis* in the matter of faith. It seems to me that the lack of faith of present-day humanity, its inability truly to believe in God, finds its concentrated expression in this Crisis of Jewry; here all is darker, more fraught with danger, more fateful than anywhere else in the world. Neither is this Crisis resolved here in Palestine; indeed we recognise its severity here even more than elsewhere among Jews. But at the same time we realise that here alone it can be resolved. There is no solution to be found in the life of isolated and abandoned individuals.'

It seems to me that little should be added. Here Buber is speaking of what is troubling his mind more than anything else, namely the crisis of Faith. That crisis which is the underlying reason and cause for so many evils and horrors which we have witnessed in our own time. The crisis which led to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. The crisis which we are still part of, and which we have still not found the ways to resolve. The crisis which may ultimately bring about destruction if we do not teach our fellows to recognise and understand it and act accordingly.

Buber then goes on to speak of 'the most significant of all the things you tell us'—Palestine and Arab-Jewish relations.

'I belong to a group of people ("The Bond") who, from the time when Britain conquered Palestine, have not ceased to strive for the concluding of genuine peace between Jew and Arab. . . . But now you come and settle the whole existential dilemma with one simple formula: "Palestine belongs to the Arabs".

'What do you mean by saying that a land belongs to a population? Evidently you do not intend only to describe a state of affairs by your formula, but to declare a certain right. You obviously mean to say that a people, being settled on the land, has such an absolute claim to the possession of this land that whoever settles in it without the permission of this people, has committed a robbery. But by what means did the Arabs attain to the right of ownership in Palestine? Surely by conquest, and, in fact, by conquest by settlement. You therefore admit that, this being so, it constitutes for them an exclusive right of possession; whereas the subsequent conquests of the Mamelukes and the Turks. . . do not constitute such in your opinion, but leave the former conquering nation in rightful ownership. . . .

'Possibly the time is not far removed when—perhaps after a catastrophe the extent of which we cannot yet estimate [written in 1939!]—the representatives of humanity will have to come to some agreement on the re-establishment of relations between peoples, nations and countries on the colonisation of thinly populated territories as well as on a communal distribution of the necessary raw materials and on a logical intensification of the cultivation of the globe in order to prevent a new, enormously extended migration of nations which would threaten to destroy mankind. Is then the dogma of possession, of the inalienable right of ownership, of the sacred status quo, to be held up against the men who dare to save the situation?'

'We do not want force', Buber goes on to say in a most significant passage. 'But after the resolution of Delhi, at the beginning of March 1922, you yourself, Mahatma Gandhi, wrote: "Have I not repeatedly said that I would have India become free even by violence rather than that she should remain in bondage?" This was a very important pronouncement on your part: you asserted thereby that nonviolence is for you a faith

and not a political principle—and that the desire for the freedom of India is even stronger in you than your faith. And for this. I love you. We do not want force. We have not proclaimed, as did Jesus, the son of our people, and as you do, the teaching of nonviolence, because we believe that a man must sometimes use force to save himself or, even more, his children. But from time immemorial we have proclaimed the teaching of justice and peace: we have taught and we have learnt that peace is the aim of all the world and that justice is the way to attain it. Thus we cannot desire to use force. No one who counts himself in the ranks of Israel can desire to use force. . . .

'You say it is a stigma against us that our ancestors crucified Jesus. I do not know whether that actually happened; but I consider it possible. I consider it just as possible as that the Indian people under different circumstances should condemn you to death—if your teachings were more strictly opposed to their own tendencies (India, you say, is by nature nonviolent). Not infrequently do nations swallow up the greatness to which they have given birth. How can one assert, without contradiction, that such action constitutes a stigma! I should not deny, however, that although I should not have been among the crucifiers of Jesus, I should also not have been among his supporters. For I cannot help withstanding evil when I see that it is about to destroy the good. I am forced to withstand the evil in the world, just as the evil within myself.'

Buber now raises the age-long question of nonviolence and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and questions the truth of Gandhi's statement about India being 'by nature nonviolent'. No less than any other country in the world, India was the scene of many a fierce and cruel battle, of murder and bloodshed. Its sacred scriptures, especially the *Mahabharata* abound in odes to warlike courage and force.

As we have seen, Buber's fundamental standpoint is not that of a pacifist. To the present day he is fighting for peace between Jews and Arabs, yet to the present day he would maintain that evil must be withstood. 'Resist ye not evil', so ardently proclaimed by Jesus, Tolstoy, Gandhi, is not acceptable to the Jewish

philosopher who is the most sincere peace-lover among Jews in Israel or abroad.

Let us now dwell upon some points raised by J. L. Magnes in his letter to Gandhi in the same pamphlet. He was at that time Rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

' "I would not wait for fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest are bound to follow my example." But the question is how can Jews in Germany offer civil resistance? The slightest sign of resistance means killing or concentration camps or being done away with otherwise. It is usually in the dead of night that they are spirited away. No one, except their terrified families, is the wiser. It makes not even a ripple on the surface of German life. The streets are the same, business goes on as usual, the casual visitor sees nothing. Contrast this with a single hunger strike in an American or English prison and the public commotion that it arouses. Contrast this with one of your fasts, or with your salt march to the sea, or a visit to the viceroy, when the whole world is permitted to hang upon your words and be witness to your acts. Has not this been possible largely because, despite all the excesses of its imperialism, England is after all a democracy with a parliament and a considerable measure of free speech? I wonder if even you would find the way to public opinion in totalitarian Germany, where life is snuffed out like a candle, and no one sees or knows that the light is out. . . .

'If ever a people was a people of nonviolence through century after century, it was the Jews. I think they need learn but little from anyone in faithfulness to their God and in their readiness to suffer while they sanctify His Name.'

Magnes now refers to the agreement planned at that time between the Evian Refugee Committee and the German Nazi Government, by which the Nazis would let a limited number of Jews leave Germany annually, in exchange for which they will confiscate all German Jewish property!

'Here is the dilemma', says Magnes. 'If one does not subscribe, no Jews will be able to escape from this prison of torture called Germany. If one does subscribe, one will be cooperating

with that Government, and be dealing in Jewish flesh and blood in a most modern and up-to-date slave market.

'I see before me here in Jerusalem a child who is happy now that he is away from the torment there, and his brother, or parent, or grand-parent. One of the oldest Jewish sayings is: "Who saves a single soul in Israel is as if he had saved a whole world". Not to save a living soul? And yet to cooperate with the powers of evil and darkness? Have you an answer?'

The rest of Magnes's objections and criticisms are similar to those of Buber's, and we shall refer the reader to Reference 2 for further reading.

For a long time Buber has understood this age as a time of crisis, and patiently yet unrelentingly indicated the chief symptoms and the major problems of this crisis, as well as some ways and hopes for recovery. Humanity is mentally diseased, and the true philosophers must be its doctors.

The fate of the Jewish people during the Second World War, no less than the War itself, is one of the worst horrors and severest symptoms of this century. Yet it may be beyond us to grasp this horror and its meaning in their entirety. It is by no means easy for any serious thinker to face the peculiar aspect which the human condition has assumed in general, as well as in his particular case, owing to the various features of this fantastic and rapidly-changing age, of such contradictory and bewildering aspects.

Both Gandhi and Buber had to confront 'the spirit of the age' as well as their own specific environment and circumstances and the context of their own respective personal evolutions and problems.

Buber—a European, a Jew and a German, nourished on Jewish-German culture, on the Jewish religion and scriptures as well as the best of German philosophy. Gandhi—an Indian who had undergone many mental and emotional conflicts, of a basically moral and profoundly religious nature, and had evolved the nonviolent philosophy and religious principles and faith which served as its basis. Both men, however, despite all their differences in mental structure, were deeply religious, each in his

own way. Both must never be taken too lightly, and both were spiritual leaders of certain sections of their respective peoples—the Jewish and the Indian—although Buber's leadership was, statistically speaking, certainly less powerful and influential than Gandhi's. The concrete circumstances in which each of them found himself, and the different emotional implications for either of them of the horrors in Germany and elsewhere, are not to be overlooked when thinking about this dispute. Buber had a great reverence for Gandhi, shared at that time by quite an international circle of thinkers, writers etc. Yet this reverence could not blind him to the discrepancy between what was actually happening and Gandhi's ideas about what was happening.

The problem has to be undetstood as twofold: First, *understanding* what is happening; secondly, drawing conclusions for action or inaction, based upon principles, comprehension and reflection. It is clear that Buber and Gandhi not only differed on the second issue, but also on the first. And it must be conceded that on the first Buber was better informed.

Gandhi's insufficient acquaintance with Jewish history and problems as well as the European (especially German) social, cultural and racial complexity was amply demonstrated in Buber's letter. Gandhi made statements on problems of violence and nonviolence in all parts of the world at various times, always applying the same principles of nonviolence as being the best way, practically and morally, of solving personal as well as political disputes and conflicts. Whether he always *understood* the situation properly is a different question. Facing a situation in reality is different from having to state one's mind about it, having only heard about it by writing or hearsay.

But what concerns us primarily is the approach to this specific Jewish problem in 1938 and later, having the bitter knowledge of what happened to Jews and non-Jews during the following years through violence, hatred, persecution, dictatorship and the horrors perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Let us not forget that Buber and Gandhi were not dealing with philosophers, but with Hitler's and Himmler's insane institutions, such as S.A., S.S., Gestapo, and blind racial doctrines and hatred. A veritable

psychosis seizing millions of people, and then engulfing the whole world in an attempt to save the situation, through the death of many more millions on both sides.

This was a most serious and painful problem to face in 1938-39: a group of mentally diseased people attempting the extermination of millions of 'racially inferior', 'dirty and loathsome' Jews, engaged in its actual performance in Nazi concentration camps—one of the most devilish and Godless institutions of its kind in all history—and the principles of nonviolence in Gandhi's India purporting to be applicable to all human situations. The dilemma of a peace-loving Jewish philosopher in Jerusalem could not be more agonising.

While considering Buber's situation, let us also remember that his immigration to Palestine had been founded on a long quest for the solution of the Jewish problem in Europe, and in the whole world, and the evolution of his personal Zionism as an inner (as well as national) need. The arguments of his letter to Gandhi are merely the political, social and moral. Naturally enough, he did not speak of his own personal conflict in much detail.

We shall therefore not 'draw conclusions' or 'take sides' in this dispute. This article has been written for the sole purpose of stimulating Jews, Indians, and whoever is concerned with the fate of the human race, to think and reflect on these problems, read Buber's and Gandhi's writings on these issues, and thus try to understand what has happened to us, and what is still happening. Understanding is the primary necessary condition for partial or complete solution of human problems.

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Gandhism and Socialism

B. G. GOKHALE

From time to time there has been talk of Gandhian socialism and the synthesis of Gandhism and socialism. The history of politics in India during last three decades has been profoundly influenced by the three forces of nationalism, socialism and Gandhism. Mahatma Gandhi began his political career in India in the early 'thirties dedicated to the realization of certain well-defined political goals comprehensively described as purna svaraj. He started his leadership as a nationalist, though as time passed he constantly enlarged the scope of his nationalist philosophy. This finally emerged as sarvodaya and acquired the official sanction of the Indian National Congress as its philosophy of political action and corporate life. Gandhi transformed nationalism from being a mere politics of protest to a consistent philosophy of life.

The association between Gandhism and socialism came about in an adventitious manner. It was only after 1930 that there was an incursion of socialist ideas into the Congress ranks that needed recognition, and the association of Gandhism and socialism was an attempt at such recognition. Such a recognition, however, demanded not only an operational adjustment but also an ideological reconciliation and the latter has left its mark both on Gandhism as well as on socialist thinking in India. For, Gandhism and Marxism, the stem from which socialism sprang, embodied two entirely different world views.

It is not necessary here to go into a discussion of the fundamentals of Marxism, except to refer to the four principles with which Marxism begins its statement of political faith. These are; the acceptance of historical determinism as the only valid method for the correct interpretation of the totality of human experience; the admissibility of the methodology of violence in a

revolutionary attempt aimed at bringing about structural changes in society; the acceptance of an interregnum called the dictatorship of the proletariat controlling the coercive apparatus of the state to stabilize the revolution; and finally, the faith in the eventual emergence of a stage of statelessness as the summum bonum.

The four dominant influences on Gandhi's thought have been those of Ruskin, Tolstoy, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the 'Sermon on the Mount'. From Ruskin Gandhi learnt, if we may so put it, the doctrine that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all; that all labour, whether performed by a stonemason or a philosopher, is of equal value, being equally socially significant; and that each individual, in order, to claim the privileges of membership of the social group, must perform some physical labour which he termed 'bread-labour'. With Ruskin Gandhi firmly believed in the supremacy of spiritual values, the essential goodness of human nature, that character was a much more significant achievement than anything else and that the machine degrades, rather than ennobles, humanity. From Tolstoy Gandhi acquired his deep admiration for Christian ethics as expressed through the 'Sermon on the Mount'. Charity, compassion, love, these formed the core of his philosophy of life, and this love meant the love of God. As he said: 'I have been a willing slave to this most exacting Master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as the years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy.'[1] This attitude of love for God and, as its corollary, love for man, became the law of his being.[2] All other ideas flowed logically from this central concept. For him the ethical consideration was supreme, equally valid in religion and social and economic life. He said: 'True economics never militates against the highest ethical standards, just as all true ethics worth

1. *Harijan*, 5 June 1933.
2. *Young India*, 3 September 1922.

its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak is a false and dismal science.'[3] For Gandhi, then, economic relations, as all other human relations, are ethical relations. He always insisted on ethical means and for him means and ends were mutually convertible terms. He spoke of life in a series of dichotomous terms, like truth and untruth, nonviolence and violence, non-possession and possessiveness.

In this insistence on ethics Gandhi differs markedly from Marxism. Marxian thought, as it has developed, always speaks of capitalist morality and proletarian morality, while for Gandhi morality was a single and indivisible corpus of principles applicable to all human beings regardless of class affiliations. Property and labour he viewed from this central points of ethics and stressed the primacy of the individual. On the basis of this he attempted an essay in the reconstruction of society.

But if Gandhi was uncompromisingly clear about his faith he could be perplexingly vague in the use of some of the terms. For instance, on several occasions he declared that he was a socialist.[4] 'Socialism', he said, 'is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high because it is the top of the body nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal so are the members of society. This is socialism.

'In it, the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee, are all on the same level. In terms of religion, there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. . . . Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one, and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If however the beginner is a zero, in other

3. *Harijan*, 10 September 1937.
4. See Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, VIII, 40.

words no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value.'[5]

But Gandhi insisted that he was a socialist of a different genre. 'The socialism and communism of the west', he said, 'are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it, for I know that the essential difference between man and brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.'[6] Gandhi furtherd eclared: 'My fundamental difference with the socialists is well known. I believe in conversion of human nature and in striving for it. They do not believe in this.'[7] Jawaharlal Nehru says that when Gandhi calls himself a 'socialist', he uses the word in a sense peculiar to himself which has little or nothing to do with the economic framework of society which goes by the name of socialist. For Gandhi points out that 'socialism, and more particularly Marxism, because of their association with violence' are such as to go counter to his creed. The very words 'class war' breathe conflict and violence and are thus repugnant to him. He has also no desire to raise the standards of the masses beyond a certain very modest competence, for higher standards and leisure may lead to self-indulgence and sin. It is bad enough that the handful of the well-to-do are self-indulgent, it would be much worse if their numbers were added to.

'That outlook is as far removed from the socialistic, or for that matter the capitalistic, as anything can be . . . . The promise of socialism, therefore, holds no attraction for him, and capitalism is only partly tolerable because it circumscribes the evil. He dislikes both, but puts up with the latter for the present as a lesser evil and as something which exists and of which he has to

5. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
6. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, 8 February 1934.
7. Tendulkar, *op. cit.* V. 114.

take cognizance.'[8]

Thus while Gandhi shares the socialist abhorrence of exploitation and social injustice, his differences with socialism are equally profound. While Marxism views history in terms of classes in conflict Gandhi views it as a ceaseless growth, an 'unfoldment in terms of spirituality'.[9] This is poles apart from the Marxist dialectic. If the Marxist accepts violence as a part of revolutionary changes, to Gandhi nothing is worth while, not even socialism, if it is based on violence. Where the Marxist says that class-war is not only inevitable but desirable in certain contexts, Gandhi declares that 'class-war is foreign to the essential genius of India, which is capable of evolving communism on the fundamental rights of all, on equal justice. 'The Ramarajya of my dreams ensures the rights alike of prince and pauper.'[10] Gandhi accused the conventional revoluntionary parties and trade unions of 'trying to become capitalists themselves by destroying the capitalists rather than sterilizing capital'.[11] He never subscribed to the Marxist contention that capitalists and land-lords were 'exploiters by an inherent necessity, or that there is a basic or irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and those of the masses'.[12] In his view the setting up of one class against another was not only unnecessary but also immoral. He supported the plea for equal distribution of wealth but added that if this was not possible then there should be at least equitable distribution. In his opinion capital as such is not evil; it is its wrong use that is evil. 'Capital in some form or other will always be needed.'[13] He argued that 'all men do not have the same ability but a just social order should ensure that there is equal opportunity for all'.[14]

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is the most significant depar-

8. *Nehru on Gandhi*, p. 94—96,
9. *Young India*, 16 September 1926.
10. *Amrit Bazar Patrika* 8 February 1934.
11. See N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 87.
12. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, 8 March 1934.
13. *Harijan*, 28 July 1949.
14. *Young India*, 28 November 1911.

ture from Marxian economic thinking. Gandhi exhorted the owners of capital to look upon themselves as trustees of the people for the property in their care. They must not think in terms of rights of absolute ownership over the instruments of production and should draw from them only as much as was needed for their living, returning the rest to society. In this way he sought not to destroy the capitalist but to destroy capitalism.[15] He held that the production of wealth is a cooperative process involving the contribution of labour, capital and management, and all these, according to him, stand in relation to one another on the basis of an equality of status. If the capitalist uses the power of his wealth for social control, labour may also use its own power, that of saying 'No' in unity and strength to the capitalist who is out to exploit. In place of vertical class divisions Gandhi argued in favour of horizontal groupings, as implied in his interpretation of the theory of varna, or occupational divisions, without any hierarchy of power or prestige associated with them.

Gandhi also significantly differed from the socialist in his view of the state and its role in social and economic change. While the Marxists argue that the working class should capture the levers of state power to turn the apparatus against the capital-owning classes, Gandhi turns away from the state. Philosophically he calls himself an enlightened anarchist. He favours the maximum decentralization of power through a plurality of institutions effectively sharing power with the state. He says: 'The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth. I use the adjective "moral" as synonymous with spiritual. This end can be achieved under decentralization. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with the nonviolent structure of society.'[16] He amplified this by saying: 'What I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the state but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as, in my opinion, the violence

15. *Young India*, 26 November 1931.
16. *Harijan*, 18 January 1942.

of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the state. However, if it is unavoidable I would support a minimum of state-ownership.'[17] For Gandhi the state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul and a concience, but the state is a soulless machine which can never be weaned from the violence to which it owes its very existence.[18] And consequently he looks upon any 'increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear because, although apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.'[19] And therefore, if the state is used as an instrument for the ending of capitalism through organized violence it is bound to perpetuate this violence in new forms. For Gandhi self-government meant a 'continuous effort to be independent of governmental control'[20] leading to the establishment of the 'sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority'.[21] Real freedom, then, means 'not the acquisition of authority by a few but the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused'.[22] Gandhi admits that the ideal state of his conception is well-nigh an impossibility and quotes with obvious approval Thoreau's dictum that 'that government is best which governs the least'.[23]

Gandhi envisages, as an ideal State, a 'stateless' democracy which works through small autonomous village republics. He argued against large-scale industrialization and decried the craze for machinery. He recommended as an ideal an economy of subsistence based on the spinning wheel under which the instruments of production would be universally owned.[24] According to him the 'economic constitution of India and, for the matter of

17. See Bose, *op. sit.*, p. 42.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
20. *Young India*, 8 June 1925.
21. *Harijan*, 1 February 1937.
22. *Young India*, 29 January 1925.
23. *Young India*, 2 July 1931.
24. *Harijan*, 10 December 1938.

that, the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all, as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust.'[25] His socialism, he asserts, is that which is handed down by the ancients when they said: 'All land belongs to God, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it.'[26] This socialism, therefore, is something quite different from the socio-economic theory propounded by Marx. Gandhi equates his socialism with truth, nonviolence, bread-labour, voluntary cooperation and an agricultural-rural civilization based on handicrafts. He points out that he is not against the machine as such, as he says that he does 'visualize electricity, ship-building, iron-works, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto, industialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts.' And finally he declares: 'I do not share the socialist belief that centralization of the necessaries of life conduce to the common welfare, when the centralized industries are planned and owned by the state.'[27]

Such, then, are Gandhi's views on the reorganization of the social and economic life of the people. He calls these socialistic, but there are more of incompatibilities than affinities between Gandhism and Marxism. Whereas Marxism insists on accepting dialetical materialism as the sole instrument for the correct interpretation of man's history, Gandhi's view of human history is essentialy spiritual. Where Marxism speaks of class-war, Gandhi argues in terms of a new interpretation of the varna system.

25. *Young India*, 15 November 1928.
26. Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 140.
27. *Ibid.*, V, p. 277.

Marxism stresses its role as a movement aimed at social revolution resulting in a violent over-throw of the property-owning classes and their state; Gandhi pleads for conciliation and trusteeship. It is only in the last premise, concerning the ultimate ideal of 'statelessness', that Marxism and Gandhism show a surface similarity. The marxist 'stateless' state can arise only after the dictatorship of the proletariat has succeeded in completely liquidating all opposition. Gandhi, on the other hand, speaks of village republics based on handicrafts and decentralization of power.

It is clear that the framework and substance of Gandhi's ideas are Utopian, in the best sense of the term. Like the Marxists, Gandhi too is dissatisfied with the world and hence the starting point for both is identical. But the common ground is restricted to the starting point alone. From that point onwards the two thought-systems wend their separate ways, though both of them share a certain common social idealism calling for justice in the affairs of men. Gandhi's system may be described as 'ethical socialism', for in his view man is first an ethical being and a socialist afterwards. His understanding of society is in terms of the 'ethical man' rather than of the 'economic man'. For Gandhi, probably, the true socialist is embodied in the ideal of the sthitaprajna, of which the *Gita* gives such an eloquent description, or the arhat of which the Buddhist books so constantly speak. If Marxism is the child of the Industrial Revolution, Gandhism can be understood only in the context of certain basic spiritual premises of Indian history. Machiavelli, Marx and Gandhi indicate distinct phases of a complex evolution of political thought in the world influenced by three continent-shaking revolutions, the commercial, industrial and colonial. Gandhi seems to open a new dimension in political thinking by his insistence on ethicalizing politics where Marxism politicalizes ethics.

Gandhi in the New York Times, 1920-1930

MARK HANNON

In the early 'twenties, the *New York Times* did very little to help readers gain an understanding of Gandhi, his work, or his philosophy. Although he was by then middle-aged, and had formulated his major policies as humanist, politician, and religious leader, most Americans did not at that time consider Gandhi a unique example of East meeting West, although he was a man who had received much of his education in England, who understood us, and who had proven himself in the mixing pot that was South Africa.

In relating the philosophy of Gandhi to the news articles printed in the *New York Times* during the years 1920 to 1930, it is essential to recognize three points: first, the West made only a meagre attempt to elucidate the philosophy of Gandhi in his own terms; second, established fact in many cases is misstated; third, the Westerners seemed unable to relate events without adding a comment on the impossibility of Gandhi's understanding what he is about, or at least showing him in a conflict of policy.

The first mention of Gandhi in the *New York Times* during the 'twenties comes in 1921. An editorial of that year announces: 'Sir Valentine Chirol does not believe that the boycott will really spread, or that Mr Gandhi will attain formidable political power in India'.[1] It is only pertinent here to remark that a politician might find reason for scepticism, but if he were alert, he could not neglect the potential of Gandhi as written in the events of South Africa, nor could he be unaware that Gandhi already had a following that was growing rapidly.

1. *New York Times*, 9 January 1921, II, 2:5.

An editorial which appears the following year, however, actually sets the tone of the West's early misinterpretation of fact. In referring to Gandhi's stay in England, the reporter announces, 'He had a large allowance, which he spent lavishly among people who promised him a social career. Most of the young Indians then being educated in England were Brahmans. They ignored him. When he saw them received at homes he had not been able to enter he realized the hoplessnes of his social ambitions and went back to India a disillusioned man.'[2] The autobiography deals with Gandhi's stay in England and can hardly be interpreted as the work of a disillusioned young man; in it he admits that his desire to become an English gentleman persisted for a few months, but that he soon found himself pretending and gave up the attempt in order to become a serious student. This same article completely ignores South Africa and refers to Gandhi's first reading Tolstoy during the First World War. 'The personality of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament stories, also greatly appealed to him, until he beheld in himself the saviour of his people. It was in this exalted state of mind that he returned to India.'[3]

Concerning the New Testament, which he enjoyed completely, Gandhi comments, 'My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia*, and the Sermon on the Mount. That renunciation was the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly. . . . I took mental note that I should read more religious books and acquaint myself with all the principal religions.'[4] One often wonders, precisely where a reporter gets his information from; perhaps he is at times carried away by the exuberance of an original opinion.

March of 1922 seems to have been a prolific month; Philip Whitwell did an article in which a portrait of Gandhi appears showing him as a young man (then aged fifty-three) in typical Indian dress, the rebel savage. Mr Whitwell declares, 'He discouraged violence, but with the next breath he denounced the

2. 'Gandhi's Hold on India', *New York Times*, 11 March 1922, 2:1.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *'Autobiograhy'*, p. 68-69.

constituted authority of the country in terms which were plainly an incitement. While disdaining the use of force, he prophesied 'seas of blood' and his name was used on placards calling on the people to dishonour white women—not without deplorable results. He announced strikes or hartals which were as avowedly revoluntionary as has been the revolt in South Africa just crushed by General Smuts.'[5]

Gandhi has elucidated the difference between *satyagraha* and passive resistance; in *satyagraha* there is no intention of injuring the opponent. In his book, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, pages 113-114, Gandhi writes, 'Satyagraha is soul force pure and simple, and whenever and to whatever extent there is room for the use of arms or physical force or brute force, there and to that extent is there so much less possibility of soul force'. Gandhi relized, as must any leader, that the followers of his philosophy will at times be less than perfect, even uncontrollable, and that the name of his cause and even he himself must shoulder the blame for the abuses wrought in connection with it. Even though the use of Gandhi's name on placards of violence may be undeniable, it hardly seems reasonable to imply his sanction of such activities.[6]

Mr Whitwell continues, 'But what Gandhi had to face was the fact that among Indians themselves there was as yet no acknowlegement of race equality. . . . Gandhi was thus charged with a double mission—not only to deal with the British, but also to get rid of the evils and inequalities from which India herself had suffered for thousands of years before the British put in an appearance. In fact, it was obvious that only by contact with the West would Gandhi's gospel be realized. The religious toleration for which he pleaded was neither more nor less than the religious toleration on which Britain had insisted.'

5. Philip Whitwell, 'India as Greater Ireland' *New York Times*, 19 March 1922, VIII, 4:1.

6. Many times Gandhi called a halt to the satyagraha movements when violence occurred. He exclaims, 'It is also necessary to point out that I do not claim for people calling themselves satyagrahis all the merits which I have described as being characteristic of satyagraha.' See, for example, *Autobiography*, p. 115.

The issue of equality was one Gandhi was very aware of; his first efforts in the social field were directed towards the elimination of internal problems among the Indians; his acceptance of the family of 'untouchables' into the new-fledged Ashram indicates that he did more than speak equality. At a later date he brought his influence to bear on the Congress by tendering and effecting resolutions about Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of 'untouchability', and khadi. Gandhi was not striving for the 'religious toleration on which the British had insisted'; that policy was the advocacy of a relationship of isolated parts held together by toleration. Gandhi wanted more than toleration; he wanted harmony.

The general trend of thought continued throughout 1922; it illustrates the continued tendency of the public to rely on the news as unbiased and veritable. Consequently, later in the year P. B. Wilson authoritatively states, 'In India it has been the Westerner entirely who has established hospitals, provided or trained doctors and nurses, and generally brought the sick of both sexes into touch with medical science. Gandhi limits life to the spinning wheel, worked by hand, and would keep India crippled. . . . Where Gandhi has failed is not in words, in generous impulses, in aspirations, but in patience. . . what India needs is the builder. . . . In India there are thousands of such builders, who do not agitate, but go on quietly, each with his or her job.'[7]

Gandhi spends two chapters in the Autobiography discussing organization of education, sanitation, and medical facilities in the villages; the book is filled with zealous attempts to bring the Indian people together. No nationality can hope to achieve a unity that is spontaneous and genuine if effected by an extraneous power. The Britisher was not prepared to sacrifice himself for the Indian; Gandhi was. The Mahatma devotes two additional chapters to the spinning wheel, his 'panacea for the growing pauperism of India'. One must grasp the significance of

7. P. B. Wilson, 'The Things That Are Caesar's', *New York Times*, 9 April 1922, III, 1.

the grinding poverty of India's masses; the majority of her people had no money for cloth, owned one rag of clothing, and were entirely dependent on the mill-owners and the monopolized trade handled by the British. The British concern was purely commercial; the humanitarian element was a facade.

The first front-page story on Gandhi was occasioned by his release from prison in February of 1924. The article is the first piece of news that seems, in part, to record accurately the situation as well as comprehend his philosophy. 'His great power . . . consisted of a policy and a creed. The policy was "non-co-operation"; the creed was "the power of the soul". By the first he hoped to make the British administration inoperative by simply considering it non-existent; by the second he hoped to make the Hindus worthy of self-government and the British to realize that worthiness.'[8]

The following year Gandhi is again attacked for his stand against the industrialism of the West. Oddly enough, the accusation is framed in the interests of the Indian people. Mr. Strunsky postulates a general revolt against the civilization of the West, intensified by a return to the native vernaculars, C. R. Das's exhortation to his countrymen to be themselves instead of imitation Englishmen, and further still by Gandhi's renunciation of the Western ideal of domination and material good. Strunsky explains the cause of revolt with an inference about the political condition of India at the time—a set of circumstances in which the educated Indian was given very little, if any, hand in higher government of his own country, suggesting that if India were free, it would be conceivable that the Indian would not be so apt to revolt against Western civilization. He concludes, 'Gandhi and his spinning wheel are more than an anachronism. They are a serious obstacle to the uplifting of the Indian people . . . .We are led to suspect that the gulf between East and West is less a difference between the Veda and the steam engine than difference between a rigid social system and a free social system. Gandhi's fight against caste . . . had had meagre results.

8. *New York Times*, 5 February 1924, 1:4.

What Gandhi has failed to accomplish will, in the course of time, be brought about by Western industrialism.'[9]

I have, for the present, dealt sufficiently with the spinning wheel controversy; here the additional issues are caste and industrialism. Gandhi recognized the necessity of abolishing the present form of the caste system, but insisted on a society where the duties of the individual were defined in terms of his neighbour; at the same time the ideal social order would provide a return for a particular ability while admitting no distinction of social prestige.[10]

The issue of industrialism is treated on pages 114-115 of Mr. Datta's *The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi;* the Mahatma observes:

> Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour. What I object to is the craze for machinery; not machinery as such. . . Men go on 'saving labour', till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all; I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. . . . I am aiming, not at eradication of machinery, but limitation. The supreme consideration is man.

Gandhi was preeminently practical; he was seldom unaware of the facts or his own position. In 1925 he declined an invitation to tour the United States. According to the *New York Times*, he says, 'I have not a shadow of a doubt about the truth of my fundamental position . . . but I know that I am unable to carry with me the bulk of educated India. I can therefore gain no effective help for my country from the Americans and Europeans

9. Simeon Strunsky, 'Gandhi and the Steam Engine', *New York Times*, 23 August 1925, III, 4:1.
10. See especially Gandhi's paraphrase, *Unto This Last*.

so long as I remain isolated from educated India.'[11]

Later in the 'twenties, a shift towards an understanding of Gandhi becomes apparent; in 1928 Nellie Lee Holt submits the first comprehensive study of Gandhi in his own surroundings. She met Gandhi at the Wardha Ashram and records this conversation:

' "What does religion mean to you?" he asked.

' "What my expereince has taught me", I said.

' "You may be correct. Who knows?" he rejoined. "Each man, according to his own right, manifests the truth. Yet no-one manifests the truth completely, hence no-one but an egoist would say, "I have the truth" . . . . One religion suits you. Another suits me. They have each arisen from the searching of persons of similar temperaments after the truth. Neither is exactly right. But if you follow yours you will be satisfied in so far as you are capable, and I in so far as I am capable. My child, our ultimate goals are the same. Our paths are forever different." '[12]

Miss Holt has avoided a political discussion; her article very effectively outlines the life of Gandhi and his followers in the Ashram as well as giving the West a close look at his character. It may have jolted many to learn that Gandhi was the most cheerful person she had ever met; the toothless emaciated little man had a glowing spontaneous warmth that affected anyone who was near him.

Miss Holt concludes, 'The stillness of night had closed over the weary day. Mahatma Gandhi sat among his followers silent, majestic, and at peace.' The article is not particularly profound; it is perhaps even a bit romantic; still it is an instance of juncture in the trend of Western journalism.

The *Times* printed, in 1930, a review, written by Charles Johnson, of C. F. Andrews's book *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*. Mr. Johnson comments that 'His fellow countrymen are attracted equally by his [Gandhi's] personality and his ideas; perhaps most of all by the thoroughness with which he has incarnated his

11. *New York Times*, 22 October 1925, 16:3.
12. Nellie Lee Holt, 'With Mahatma Gandhi in His Retreat', *New York Times*, 11 March 1928, V, 11:1.

ideas in his personality. Professing entire reliance on spiritual law . . . his present pilgrimage is but the latest illustration of his consistent belief that material ends, even the political independence of 300,000,000 people, can and should be obtained by immaterial means. . . . At first Mohandas Gandhi was absorbed in social reform: in limiting the marriage of young girls, in opening the way for remarriage of youthful widows, in raising the social position of the "untouchables". . . . But certain elements of violence—murders committed by the natives of India and British repraisals—turned Gandhi from a friendly attitude towards British rule to one first of criticism, and finally of hositlity.'[13]

The 'certain elements' which Johnson alludes to are enumerated by Gandhi in his declaration at the trial on 18 March 1922:

> 'I am here . . . to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen.' He then proceeded to explain 'why, from a staunch loyalist and cooperator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-cooperator'. He told of his African experiences, how he had gone to war on the side of the British, and, in India, recruited for their armies. 'I was actuated by the belief', he said, 'that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen'. Then in 1919 came the shocks: The Rowlatt Acts, the Jallianwalla massacre, the floggings, the injustice to the Turkish Caliph. Nevertheless, 'I fought for cooperation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms". But "I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically' . . . . He therefore regarded it 'an honour to be disaffected' and requested 'the severest penalty". . . . This was not the last time the British arrested and imprisoned Gandhi. But it was the last time they tried him.[14]

13. Charles Johnson, 'Mahatma Gandhi, India's Apostle of Non-cooperation', *New York Times*, 30 March 1930, IV, 3:1.
14. Louis Fischer, *Gandhi, His Life and Message for the World*, pp. 72-73.

The foregoing is perhaps a rather spare sample of the articles printed in the *New York Times* during the decade 1920-1930 but the implication seems none the less clear; although chronologically the trend appears to have been towards an understanding of Gandhi, in most cases remarkable mis-statements of fact, coupled with a partial commentary and an apparently undiscerning attitude towards the Eastern viewpoint, indicate that the *New York Times* did very little, during this period, to help readers gain an understanding of Gandhi.

Influence of Thoreau and Emerson on Gandhi's Satyagraha

GEORGE HENDRICK

Indian Opinion, the South African newspaper which was published by Gandhi from 1903 to 1914, contains much new material on his indebtedness to Thoreau and Emerson—the most prominent New England Transcendental writers. The influence of both of these writers upon him has long been known, but the supporting evidence has been incomplete because *Indian Opinion* was not available. Gandhi, in his 1942 appeal 'To American Friends', wrote: 'You have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience", scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa'.[1]

Similarly, Gandhi had written to Franklin Roosevelt in 1942, 'I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson'.[2] Roger Baldwin, chairman of the American Civil Liberties Union, rode with Gandhi on a train trip through France in 1931 and noticed that the only visible book was Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience'. Baldwin remarked on the extremeness of Thoreau's doctrine, and Gandhi replied that the essay 'contained the essence of his political philosophy, not only as India's struggle related to the British, but as to his own views of the relation of citizens to government'.[3]

At the Second Round Table Conference in London that same

1. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (Bombay, 1951), VI, 177. Some new evidence on Gandhi's indebtedness to Emerson and Thoreau may appear in forthcoming volumes of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*.
2. *Ibid.*, VI, 144.
3. *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, XI, 2 (April, 1945).

year, the American reporter Webb Miller, a long-time admirer of Thoreau, asked Gandhi, 'Did you ever read an American named Henry D. Thoreau?' Gandhi replied:

'Why, of course I read Thoreau. I read *Walden* first in Johannesburg in South Africa in 1906 and his ideas influenced me greatly. I adopted some of them and recommended the study of Thoreau to all my friends who were helping me in the cause of Indian independence. Why, I actually took the name of my movement from Thoreau's essay, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience", written about eighty years ago. Until I read that essay I never found a suitable English translation for my Indian word, satyagraha. You remember that Thoreau invented and practised the idea of civil disobedience in Concord, Massachusetts, by refusing to pay his poll tax as a protest against the United States government. He went to jail, too. There is no doubt that Thoreau's ideas greatly influenced my movement in India.'[4]

Miller noticed that Gandhi, a 'Hindu mystic', adopted from Thoreau the philosophy which was to affect millions of Indians and inspire them to defy the powerful British Empire. 'It would seem', Miller concluded, 'that Gandhi received back from America what was fundamentally the philosophy of India after it had been distilled and crystallised in the mind of Thoreau'.[5]

Because of lack of information, inaccuracies have been perpetuated. Henry Seidel Canby wrote in the March 1931 *Yale Review* that 'Civil Disobedience' came to Gandhi's attention while he was studying law in London 1907.[6] The New York *Evening Post* used this information in an editorial and then received a letter of correction and amplification from Henry S.L. Polak, Gandhi's co-worker in South Africa:

Mr Gandhi was not in 1907 'an obscure Hindu student' nor was he in London. He was already for fourteen years a barrister-at-law practising as a solicitor or attorney in South Africa. At the time in question he had already begun to organise his passive

4. Webb Miller, *I found No Peace* (Garden City, 1938), pp. 238-239.
5. *Loc. cit.*
6. Henry Seidel Canby, 'Thoreau and the Machine Age', *Yale Review*, XX, 517 (March 1931).

resistance movement in the Transvaal against certain anti-Indian laws that had already been passed by the Transvaal legislature.

I cannot recall whether, early in 1907, he or I first came across the volume of Thoreau's essays (published, I believe, in Scott's Library) but we were both of us enormously impressed by the confirmation of the rightness of the principle of passive resistance and civil disobedience that had been started against the objectionable laws, contained in the essay 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience'.

After consultation with Mr Gandhi I reproduced the essay in the columns of *Indian Opinion* and it was translated into the Gujarati language, in which, as well as in English, the paper was published, and the essay was subsequently circulated in pamphlet form later in the same year. *Indian Opinion* organised an essay competition on 'The Ethics of Passive Resistance', with special reference to Thoreau's essay and Socrates' writings that had already come to Mr Gandhi's notice.[7]

Gandhi's letter to Henry Salt on Thoreau's influence contradicts some of Polak's statement. Henry S. Salt one of Thoreau's earliest biographers, was interested in writing the life of Gandhi and undoubtedly would have studied Gandhi's indebtedness to Thoreau but was discouraged from writing by G. B. Shaw, who said that there was nothing more to be said about saints after his play on Joan of Arc.[8] Salt, however, did write to Gandhi, whom he had first met in London in the 1890s, asking about the influence of Thoreau. Gandhi replied, in a letter which has often been reprinted, that 'Civil Disobedience' had 'left a deep impression' upon him and that he had

> . . . translated a portion for the readers of *Indian Opinion* in South Africa which I was then editing, and I made copious extracts for the English part of the paper. The essay seemed to be so convincing and truthful that I felt the need of knowing more of Thoreau, and I came across your *Life* of him, his *Walden*, and other essays, all of which I read with great

7. New York *Evening Post*, 11 May 1931, p. 8.
8. Stephen Winsten, *Salt and His Circle* (London, 1951), p. 170.

pleasure and equal profit.[9]

The whole essay, as Polak intimated, was not reprinted, but only extracts from it. It is most likely that in consultation with Polak, Gandhi marked those passages which he wished published. The editor of the extracts in *Indian Opinion* did not sign the article, but, in his letter to Salt, Gandhi is positive that he was responsible. The extracts were made, not from the volume in Scott's Library, but from Authur C. Fifield's Simple Life edition of the essay, and were presented under the headline 'For Passive Resisters'.

The extracts began with a quotation from Tolstoy—'The principle of State necessity can bind only those men who disobey God's law, who for the sake of worldly advantages try to reconcile the irreconcilable; but a Christian who sincerely believes that the fulfilment of Jesus' teaching shall bring him salvation cannot attach any importance to this principle'—and then gave a short biographical sketch of David Thoreau who 'taught nothing he was not prepared to practise in himself'. Thoreau was extolled as one who went to jail 'for the sake of his principles and suffering humanity'. The five columns of exracts from 'Civil Disobedience' present Thoreau's argument forcefully and accurately emphasizing that the essay's 'incisive logic is unanswerable'.[10]

The extracts present in brief the main ideas of Thoreau's closely argued essay. The following passage, basic to Gandhi's philosophy of satyagraha as many other sections of 'Civil Disobedience' were, well demonstrates Gandhi's method of extracting the heart of an idea from essays:

> Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also prison. . . .
>
> If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voice no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy without its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectivley he can combat injustice who

9. Henry S. Salt, *Company I Have Kept* (London, 1930), pp. 100-101.
10. *Indian Opinion*, 26 October 1907, p. 438.

> has experienced a little in his own person.
>
> Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight.
>
> If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this years, that would not be a violent and bloody measure as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood.[11]

There can be no doubt about the appeal of Thoreau's essay, which Gandhi read at a crucial phase of his life. He was then fighting the 'Black Act' which required all Asiatics over eight years of age residing in the Transvaal to register and, as if they were criminals, give their fingerprints. Failure to register would result in a fine, a prison term, or deportation. 'I have never known legislation of this nature', Gandhi wrote, 'being directed against free men in any part of the world'.[12]

Indian Opinion helped awaken the Indians to the danger, and when the protest meeting was called for 11 September 1907, in Johannesburg, delegates representing all segments of the 13,000 Indians in the Transvaal were present. The Fourth Resolution passed that day declared that Indians would not submit to the Ordinance and would suffer all the penalties for their disobedience. Seth Haji Habib while seconding the resolution declared that it should be passed with God as witness; Gandhi, sensing the effectiveness of a religious vow, made an impassioned speech of support, ending:

> Even then there is only one course open to the likes of me, to die but not to submit to the law. It is quite unlikely, but even if everyone else flinched . . . I am confident that I would never violate my pledge . . . . Although we are going to take the pledge in a body, no one should imagine that default on the

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 439-440.
12. M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Madras, 1928), pp. 157-158.

part of one or many can absolve the rest from their obligation. Everyone should fully realize his responsibility, then only pledge himself independently of others and understand that he himself must be true to his pledge even unto death, no matter what others do.[13]

Gandhi entitled the chapter describing this meeting 'The Advent of Satyagraha'. Although this meeting was held five weeks before the extracts from 'Civil Disobedience' were published in *Indian Opinion*, he undoubtedly already knew Thoreau's philosophy. On 7 September 1907, four days before the meeting in the Imperial Theatre, *Indian Opinion* commented on the Archbishop of Canterbury's request that the clergy should not celebrate marriages with one's deceased wife's sister, even though such marriages were permitted by English law. An unsigned article in *Indian Opinion* stated:

> Rightly or wrongly, His Grace believes that, there is no warrant for such unions in the Bible and that, therefore, the Legislature has committed a breach of God's law, which it would be irreligious for the clergy to countenance. In other words, he recognised what Thoreau has said, that we should be men before we are subjects, and that there is no obligation imposed upon us by our conscience to give blind submission to any law, no matter what force or majority backs it.
>
> Such is also the position of British Indians in the Transvaal. Law-abiding they are, and it will take away nothing from the certificate they have enjoyed so long by their now refusing to accept registration under the Asiatic Law, which their cons cience rejects as degrading to their manhood and offensive to their religion. It is possible to carry the doctrine of passive resistance too far, but it is equally so with reference to the doctrine of obedience to the law. We cannot give the dividing line in words more appropriate than those of Thoreau; when speaking of the American Government he says: 'If one were to tell me that this was a bad Government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

> probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have friction, and possibly this does enough good to counter-balance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are paramount, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer.' In the Asiatic Registration Act, British Indians have not only a law which has some evil in it, that is to say, using Thoreau's words, a machine with friction in it, but it is evil legalised, or it represents friction with machinery provided for it. Resistance to such an evil is divine duty. . . .[14]

It is true, then, that Thoreau's writings were known to Gandhi during the formative period of the first satyagraha movement. 'During ten years', he wrote, 'that is, until 1914 . . . there was hardly an issue of *Indian Opinion* without an article from me'.[15]

There is every reason to believe that Gandhi read carefully every article in his publication. Though never a wide reader, he did believe in putting into practice ideas which he had accepted. Even in 1907 he attempted to follow the injunction of the *Gita* that ends and means should be the same—that a sincere man's words and action should not be at variance. Gandhi may well have read *Walden* as early as 1906; before the first satyagraha movement he had dispensed with servants, acted as his own scavenger, and was striving to be independent of machinery. His views were seemingly greatly influenced by *Walden*, but since he was using *The Times* as a pattern for *Indian Opinion*, his journalistic endeavours did not reflect his personal interests as his later papers in India did, and his reactions to *Walden* were not discussed in the paper. Rather, it was the Thoreau who went to jail 'for the sake of his principles and suffering humanity' who was emphasized in *Indian Opinion* because of the confirmation found there of the non-cooperation campaign.

Readers of *Indian Opinion* were not allowed to forget Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience. Thoreau had opposed

14. *Indian Opinion*, 7 September 1907, p. 363.
15. M.K. Gandhi, *Autobiography* (Washington, 1948), p. 348.

the enslavement of man; Indians, being enslaved themselves, needed encouragement in their struggle. The Indian community was openly defying the registration act, and the resistance of Thoreau, Tolstoy, Jesus, and Socrates seemed vital confirmation to Gandhi. *Indian Opinion* announced an essay contest on 'The Ethics of Passive Resistance', on 9 November 1907:

> As this journal has, in a humble way, led the battle of passive resistance now being offered by the Indians in the Transvaal against an Act which, in their opinion, does violence to their conscience; and as the controllers of the policy of this journal are desirous of showing the general utility of the doctrine of passive resistance, the management have decided to offer, as they now do, a prize of Ten Guineas for the best Essay on 'The Ethics of Passive Resistance'. The doctrine, religiously construed, means a fulfilment of Jesus' famous saying, 'Resist not evil'. As such, it is of eternal and universal application, and if it were practised largely, it would replace, to a great extent, if not entirely, brute force and other kindred methods for securing redress of grievances or inauguration of reforms. The management, therefore, trusts that the best men of South Africa, having leisure, will compete for the prize, not for its monetary value, but with a view to an elucidation of a principle of life which, although it has the sanction of the best minds of the world, is still little understood and less practised.

The terms of the competition stated that the essay should contain an examination 'of Thoreau's classic, "On the duty of Civil Disobedience", Tolstoy's works—more especially *The Kindom of Heaven is within you*. . . and also the application of the "Apology of Socrates" to the question'.[16] Those who entered the essay competition had access to 'Civil Disobedience', as it had been reprinted in pamphlet form for sale at 3d. and issued in time to be used by contestants not familiar with the essay.[17] Essayists also had access to an article on Socrates

16. *Indian Opinion*, 9 November 1907, p. 465.
17. *Indian Opinion*, 23 November 1907, p. 494.

almost beyond question written by Gandhi. Polak's letter to the New York *Evening Post* mentioned that 'Socrates' writings' had come to the attention of Gandhi before the contest had been announced; Gandhi was reading Socrates during his jail term in January 1908, and his paraphrase of the *Defence and Death of Socrates*, entitled *The Story of a Satyagrahi*, seemingly published only in Gujarati, was banned in India in 1919.[18] Socrates is interpreted as a man of principle following his conscience and making no attempt to escape the consequences of his civil disobedience. The essay, entitled 'Socrates as Passive Resister', in addition to the direct reference to Thoreau, is permeated with Thoreauvian views on the rights of minorities and the divinity of the conscience:

> For [Socrates] when there was to be a choice between his conscience—what he knew to be good—and what the government of the day had ordered, and what he knew to be wrong, there was no hesitation even though it might have cost him his life. Indeed his trial was a brilliant example of passive resistance. He had been preaching virtue to the Athenian youth. This tended to subvert the established order of thought and, therefore, established authority. Socrates was, therefore charged, among other things, with having corrupted the Athenians. The penalty was death. Socrates preferred the poison-bowl and his independence to a life of servile and superstitious obedience to human authority, even when it went under the name of government. 'O Athenian', says our sage, 'I honour and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you'. At the same memorable defence, Socrates says of his most virulent and self seeking traducers, 'Neither will Melitus nor Anytus harm me; nor have they the power; for I do not think that it is possible for a better man to be injured by a worse. He may perhaps have me condemned to death, or banished, or deprived of civil right; and he or others may perhaps consider these as mighty evils. I, however, do not consider them so.' Not many days after he uttered the memo-

18. Tendulkar, Mahatma, I, 295.

rable words, he died a peaceful death, discoursing on the immortality of the soul. The world knows today Melitus and his companions as murderers of a man almost divine, and Socrates lives for eternity. This passive resister, just after the sentence was pronounced upon him, delivered in his dungeon a discourse on the duties of a good citizen, and rejected the overtures of his friends to escape death by stealing out of the prison. Then, he was as hard as adamant and all respect for law and order. In Socrates, therefore, we have one of the greatest breakers as also respecters of law. The essence of his teaching and practice was that it is lawful to disregard a law or order when it is against one's conscience, i.e., a higher law, but it is not lawful to try to escape the punishment that the law imposes for such disregard.

And such is the Indian position today in the Transvaal. Indians are law-abiding. They will, therefore, suffer all the penalties that the law they refuse to respect may provide for them. The test of good citizenship is not necessarily an acceptance of everything that law-givers may have to say. That would entail a travesty of good government, national stagnation, and destruction of the rights of minorities. But the minorities who consider certain laws or orders to be wrong must, by not resisting evil, suffer in their persons the penalties for a breach of those laws, until their sufferings have produced a reaction in their favour. Acquiescence in a law which is repugnant to one's notion of right is nothing but rank cowardice, for it shows disinclination to submit to physical inconvenience. Thoreau wisely said: 'There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.' And passive resisters are, beyond doubt, the real possessors of 'the thing'; when they have lost all, they have gained everything.[19]

The essay on 'The Ethics of Passive Resistance' was to be judged by the Reverend Dr. J. Landau, who announced that he

19. *Indian Opinion*, 16 November 1907, p. 475.

in no way entered into 'the merits' of the political application of the principle of passive resistance'.[20] The entry deadline was extended from 30 November to 31 December, possibly because of a limited number of entries. Only four essays were eventually to be entered in the contest, and before the essays were judged, Gandhi who had refused to register, was arrested. He was sentenced on 10 January 1908 to two months' simple imprisonment. Gandhi remembered that there was a 'slight feeling of awkwardness due to the fact that I was standing as an accused in the very Court where I had often appeared as counsel' He then added a Thoreauvian comment: 'But I well remember that I considered the former role as far more honourable than the latter, and did not feel the slightest hesitation in entering the prisoner's box'.[21]

During this first incarceration, Gandhi read Tolstoy Ruskin, Socrates, Huxley, Bacon, and the *Gita*—the work which greatly influenced him, as it did Thoreau, as Arthur C. Christy in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* has shown. Since his days in London when he had first studied the *Gita* Gandhi had rejected the fundamentalist interpretation that this Hindu Bible was an historical work justifying violence. Gandhi felt that 'under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring'.[22] Thoreau, in his criticism of the *Gita* in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, had protested the seeming justification of violence; Gandhi undoubtedly knew of Thoreau's interest in oriental literature through his reading of *Walden* and Salt's *Life of Henry David Thoreau*, although he seemingly never saw 'A Week' with its extended comments on the *Gita*.

A settlement calling for voluntary rather than compulsory registration for Indians was arrived at and Gandhi's days of reading were cut short. Gandhi did not forget Thoreau's essay

20 *Indian Opinion*, 30 November 1907, p. 506.
21. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 231.
22. Gandhi, *The Gita According to Gandhi* (Ahmedabad, 1951), p. 127,

on civil disobedience; *Indian Opinion*, on 18 April 1908, printed the prize-essay 'The Ethics of Passive Resistance'. As Dr Landau had withdrawn from judging the contest because of political implications, Reverend J.J. Doke read the first four essays submitted and awarded the first prize to M.S. Maurice. *Indian Opinion* carefully pointed out that the essay which won did not reach the level which it had hoped for; it was indeed a pedestrian production; the section on Thoreau was largely a reproduction of the extracts which *Indian Opinion* had printed, and the sections on Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Jesus were uninspired.[23]

The continued interest in civil disobedience was justified, as General Smuts refused to keep his bargain to repeal the compulsory registration act after the Indians had voluntarily registered. Gandhi was unwilling to tolerate Smut's breach of faith; an Indian ultimatum was sent stating that if the Asiatic Act were not repealed the registration certificates of the Indians would be burned. Gandhi's inspiration may well have come from reading Salt's biography of Thoreau; Thoreau's essay on 'Slavery in Massachusetts', Salt noted, '. . . was delivered as an address at he anti-slavery celebration at Framingham in 1854, on whicht occasion the Constitution of the United States was publicly burned by Lloyd Garrison, an incident which may explain the passionate tone of Thoreau's paper'.[24]

The cerificates were burned on 16 August 1908, and Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to the Volksrust prison on 10 October 1908. He worked all during the day, but in the mornings and evenings on Sundays he read. He read 'the two famous books of Ruskin, Essays of Thoreau', and parts of the Bible, the Essays of Bacon, and several books in Gujarati. 'From Thoreau and Ruskin', he wrote, 'I could find out arguments in favour of

23. *Indian Opinion*, 18 April 1908, pp. 175-177.

24. Salt, *Life of Henry David Thoreau* (London, 1896), p. 114. I have been unable to date Gandhi's reading of the Salt biography; there was interest in Garrison among the workers of *Indian Opinion* at this time, however, as the paper ran extracts from Garrison's works on 19 March 1910.

25. Gandhi, *Speeches and Writings* (Madras, 1933), p. 226.

our fight'.[25]

Gandhi wrote that many people wondered why one should go to jail where one had to submit to personal restraints, wear the coarse, ugly garb of, and share quarters with, felons, live upon a 'non-nutritious and semi-starvation diet', and be maltreated by jail officials, separated from friends and relatives and even prohibited from writing to them. 'Such thoughts', Gandhi wrote, in describing his second jail experiences, 'make one really a coward, and being in constant dread of a jail life, deter him from undertaking to perform services in the interests of his country which might otherwise prove very valuable'.[26]

Gandhi believed that it was the 'height of one's good fortune to be in jail in the interests and good name of one's country and religion'. In jail the necessities of life were provided and the soul was left free; the body was restrained, but not the soul. A malevolent warden merely taught self-control to the prisoner. Gandhi trusted 'that the readers of this, my second experience of life in the Transvaal jail, will be convinced that the real road to ultimate happiness lies in going to jail and undergoing sufferings and privations there in the interest of one's country and religion'.[27]

He ended his account of his second jailing by adding: 'Placed in a similar position for refusing his poll-tax, the American citizen, Thoreau, expressed similar thoughts in 1849. Seeing the walls of the cell in which he was confined, made of solid stone two or three feet thick and the door of wood and iron a foot thick, he said to himself thus:

> I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not feel for a moment confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat

26. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand on the other side of the stone-wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were nearly all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come to some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was as timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it and pitied it.'[28]

Gandhi's transformation from a respectable lawyer to a radical political leader was complete.

Thoreau was not ignored during the years after satyagraha was first tried; for several years after 1908 passive resistance was offered on a small scale, and Gandhi himself did not court arrest. Two years after *Indian Opinion* had printed extracts from 'Civil Disobedience', it printed selections from Mazzini with the comment: 'We believe that when the first stage of passive resistance was at its height, the extracts we gave from Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" were very greatly appreciated by Indian passive resisters'.[29] And Gandhi himself was still reading Thoreau. By 1909 he considered that 'railways, machineries and the corresponding increase of indulgent habits are the true badge of slavery of the Indian people, as they are of Europeans'.[30] Thoreau and Tolstoy had said the same thing, and their influence is particularly strong in Gandhi's *Hind Svaraj* (Indian Home Rule), a severe castigation of the evils of Western imperialism which enslaved colonial peoples and brought material prosperity to the governing nations. Works by Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Edward Carpenter, and Thoreau's 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience' and 'Life Without Principle' were among the sources listed in the bibliography; and in a Preface to *Hind Svaraj*

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.
29. *Indian Opinion*, 20 February 1909, pp. 89-90.
30. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, 1, 127.

printed in *Indian Opinion*, Gandhi stated: 'Whilst the views expressed in *Hind Svaraj*, are held by me, I have but endeavoured humbly to follow Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau, Emerson and other writers, besides the masters of Indian philosophy'.[31] *Hind Svaraj*, banned in India, was a call for individual, Thoreauvian regeneration and shows that in 1909, six years before he was to leave South Africa, Gandhi was beginning to think of Indian affairs. One year after the publication of *Hind Svaraj*, *Indian Opinion* published excerpts from 'Life Without Principle', under the title 'Thoughts from Thoreau'.[32]

These extracts, condemning commerce, government, and intellectual stagnation, must have delighted Gandhi. The middle-class lawyer Gandhi suffered a conversion in south Africa which made him discard almost all aspects of his old life and beliefs and turn to writers who probed the meaning of civilization. Once Gandhi adopted and modified Thoreauvian-Tolstoyan-Ruskinian principles, he acted without hesitation and with determination.

The man who was to become a saint to millions of Indians, echoing Thoreau, chided Mrs Millie Polak when she wanted to spend money for curtains. Gandhi's protest that she would only shut out the view of the beautiful mountains was met with the argument that pictures and curtains would disguise the cheapness of the house. Gandhi was adamant; pointing to the beautiful scenery, he asked, 'Why do you want to cumber yourself with thing that will only need more time to be spent upon them? You say you want beauty. You have it around you. God has given you the reality; why, then, worry about the things made by man?'[33]

Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi, F. I. Carpenter has written, 'may partly be credited to Emerson's teaching, even if indirectly'.[34] Although Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi was far greater, Emerson directly influenced the Mahatma. Gandhi was

31. *Indian Opinion*, 2 April 1910, p. 110.
32. *Indian Opinion*, 10 June 1911, pp. 230-231; 22 July 1911, p. 287.
33. Millie Graham Polak, *Mr Gandhi: The Man* (Bombay, 1950) p. 56.
34. F. I. Carpenter, *Emerson Handbook* (New York, 1953), p. 251.

reading Emerson directly during his second imprisonment in South Africa and he wrote to his son on 25 March 1909 that Emerson, Ruskin, and Mazzini 'confirm the view that education does not mean a knowledge of letters but it means character building'.[35] Later in the same letter he wrote, 'Please tell Maganlalbhai that I would advise him to read Emerson's essays. . . . There is a cheap reprint out. These essays are worth studying. He should read them, mark the important passages and then finally copy them out in a notebook. The essays to my mind contain the teaching of Indian wisdom in a western guru. It is interesting to see our own sometimes thus differently fashioned.'[36]

Four years earlier *Indian Opinion* had printed the following extract from Emerson's 'The Over-Soul', an extract which Gandhi undoubtedly saw:

> The supreme critic on the error of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great Nature in which we rest, as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere: that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all others; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship; to which all right action is submission: that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents and constrains everyone to pass for what he is, and to speak from his tongue, and which ever-more tends to become wisdom, and virtue, and power, and beauty. . . . From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planning, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when

35. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York, 1950), p. 91.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

> it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love.[37]

Gandhi, although influenced by Emerson the guru, felt as many others have felt that Emerson was too much the inactive intellectual. In commenting on scriptures and nonviolence, he wrote: 'But the fact remains that religious books have a hold upon mankind which other books have not. They have made a greater impression on me than Mark Twain, or, to take a more appropriate instance, Emerson. Emerson was a thinker, Mahomed and Jesus were through and through men of action in a sense Emerson would never be.'[38]

Thoreau undoubtedly had a greater influence upon Gandhi than did Emerson because the Walden philosopher was a practical man willing to practise his beliefs. Both writers did, however, offer confirmation of Gandhi's own ideas, and the Mahatma was especially indebted to the Thoreau who defied society and government to follow his conscience.

37. *Indian Opinion*, 18 February 1905, p. 104.
38. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, IV, 168-169. The Editors of the *New England Quarterly* and the *Emerson Society Quarterly* granted permission for me to republish sections from my articles on Gandhi which appeared in their magazines.

Gandhi as a Social Revolutionary

THOMAS HYSLOP

When Mahatma Gandhi, who had been born in 1869 at Porbandar, Kathiawad, was assassinated at Birla House, New Delhi, in 1948, he was, although a private citizen without possessions, official position, academic brilliance or artistic ability, nevertheless the father of free India, a world figure and a saint. Therefore the Indian authorities received three thousand four hundred and forty one messages of sympathy from foreigners, including the Pope, the Dalai Lama, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi of London, King George VI of England, President Truman of the United States of America, General Chiang Kai-shek and the President of France.

'I never saw Gandhi. I do not know his language. I never set foot in his country', wrote M. Leon Blum, the French Socialist leader and former Prime Minister, 'and yet I feel the same sorrow as if I had lost someone near and dear. The whole world has been plunged into mourning by the death of this extraordinary man.' Describing Gandhi as 'the friend of the poorest, the loneliest and the lost', Mr Philip Noel-Baker, the British delegate at the United Nations, maintained that the sage's 'greatest achievements are yet to come'; while, according to Sir Hartley Shawcross, the British Attorney General, Gandhi was 'the most remarkable man of the century'. For Mr Andrei Gromyko of Russia this Indian was an outstanding political leader.

The Mahatma, that great soul, called upon to pass his days in a world of strife, an era of discord between nations, races, castes, classes and religions, attempted to do for all mankind that which John Wesley did in eighteenth century Britain and America, namely, to bring about a profound religious revival. He wanted you to look at yourself, vividly to realise the dangers

of your egoism, to throw that selfishness aside, and having thus been born again, to put yourself unstintingly at the service of your fellow humans and even of animals. He wished you to concentrate on your duties, not on your rights. Only then, he thought, could you be serene, happy and purposeful. Aware that there are as many philosophical outlooks, what the Hindus call darsanas, legitimate points of view as there are people, he was, unlike Wesley and in fact the average theologian of the West, indifferent to the details of your metaphysics. He merely wanted you to regard the ideal of love, altruism. which everyone is the possessor of, as the voice of God, the dictate of truth, the urge of Ultimate Reality. As is stated in an aphorism which, found in the *Mahabharata*, is known in every village of the vast subcontinent, love is the greatest religion. Even in the devout man, note well, a large measure of tolerance, reverent agnosticism, the latitudinarian spirit, is of value.

For that notable preacher and practitioner of love, Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi had a great respect, but by a fossilised orthodoxy he was atracted not at all. Christianity was according to him, neither more nor less than the Sermon on the Mount which is, as he reflected, though often commented upon, rarely lived. His favourite hymns appear to have been 'Lead Kindly Light' by Newman, 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' by Isaac Watts and 'Rock of Ages Cleft for Me' by Top-lady.

Maintaining that, if the ideal thus envisaged is to be reached, men must form an equalitarian, abstemious society wherein, each individual being autonomous, there is the minimum of external government, Gandhi became convinced, after he had returned in 1915 to India from South Africa, that his country must be rid of the British overlords. To achieve this end he insisted upon worthy means. He organised loving, self-sacrificial resistance to the dictatorship, a technique which, familiarised nowadays in England by the Committee of One Hundred, he called satyagraha, that is to say, the holding on the truth, and until India was granted independence in 1947, he and his followers performed in this way such feats as renouncing titles, the refusal to participate in State functions, boycotting courts

and schools of the government, the setting up of national courts and national schools instead, seeking imprisonment by peacefully breaking laws, picketing without violence the Government licenced sale of opium and alcohol, and refusing to assist in civil and military administration and to pay taxes.

In addition to such opposition, he advocated a constructive program. What he proclaimed was this. Every nation should be not only free but as self-sufficient as possible. Within the nation there should be small communities, each as far as practicable managing its own affairs. In India, where there are five hundred thousand villages, every village should be looked after by a council of five, a panchayat which, elected annually by all adults whether male or female, should be regarded as the legislature, judiciary and executive of the place. The villagers, acting co-operatively and as comrades, should produce their own food, clothing, milk, sanitation and supply of water. They should have their own school for primary education, playground, theatre, public hall and electricity; handicrafts should be learned, untouchability abolished, women emancipated, drugs and alcohol forbidden.

For purposes of common interest the village should be linked by means of indirect election, with taluka, district, division, province and nation. There being thus a loose federation of village republics, power, which, when wielded by the few, corrupts both them and the governed, would be thoroughly decentralised.

Gandhi strongly believed, as did Ruskin and Tolstoy before him, in the importance of useful bodily labour. He thought that everyone should indulge in such work and that, even if the task to be done is menial, it should be regarded as significant, in fact as an act of worship. Not only did he have imprinted on the Congress flag the figure of a spinning wheel but he also urged that children should be educated through a handicraft. He maintained that, when every villager is willingly a labourer, class distinction, boredom and ill health disappear.

A suitable play for the theatre would be, I suppose, one proclaiming the ideology of love. I was recently impressed by an

example which, published in 1949 by the Malayalam writer, Edasseri Govindan Nayar, is entitled *Joint Farming*. The scene is a southern Malabar village in which are rife landlordism, the fragmentation of peasant holdings, quarrels between Hindus and Muslims, strife between castes. There are two families, both of them in difficulties, one high caste Hindu and the other Muslim, the first landlord and the second tenant. When the old-fashioned head of the Hindu family dies, the new head, a young man imbued with Gandhian ideals, Sridharan Nayar by name, wishes to end the litigation which, owing to the attempt of the deceased to evict Abu Bakar the tenant, an old man, is in progress between the two families. He therefore proposes, what Abu Bakar agrees to, joint farming and common labour, a cooperative endeavour which is joined by Velu, a low caste neighbour. Although they have to endure the opposition of reactionaries, they eventually reap a spectacular harvest which converts many an erstwhile enemy. In act two scene two is a song in praise of the Mahatma, a song described by Abu Bakar as a magical incantation evolving confidence and the determination to work.

When at the end of 1955 the American Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, led by the young, highly educated Negro divine, the Rev. Martin Luther King, began in order to protest peacefully against the racial segregation which they were experiencing, to boycott the city buses, they held crowded meetings night after night in their churches. At these there were not only prayers, scripture reading, the singing of hymns and spirituals and the report of Committees, but also the acting of possible situations wherein, despite the violence of whites, loving and civil resistance would be required.

Although Gandhi's dislike of large cities seems eccentric to most Westerners, many famous thinkers, Plato among them, have advocated small communities, the founder of the Athenian academy favouring a population of five thousand. Here are a few relevant quotations:

'Experience shows', wrote Aristotle, 'that a populous city can seldom, if ever, be properly governed. Well governed cities

have a limited population.'

'Cities are', Rousseau averred, 'the abyss of the human species. At the end of a few generations in them, races perish or degenerate and it is necessary to renew them. This renewal always comes from the country.'

'When we get piled upon one another in large cities as in Europe', wrote Thomas Jefferson from America in 1737, 'we shall become as corrupt as Europe.'

'Fifty thousand people gathered in a single place', Lewis Mumford maintained in his book *The Culture of Cities*, 'can do fewer things together than twenty-five groups of two thousand.' 'Dictators love crowds,' he further pointed out, 'and seek to provide bigger arenas and auditoriums for them: the bigger the crowd, the emptier their function.'

Finally remember what, when he was delivering his Reith Lectures, Bertrand Russell said. The dearth of art and prophecy in the present age 'is an inevitable result', he proclaimed, 'of the fact that society is centralised and organised to such a degree that individual initiative is reduced to a minimum.'

Although Gandhi condemned the industrial revolution, he was not of course against machinery as such. What he objected to was mass production, the profit motive, the avid control of markets and raw materials, the erection of slums, the throwing of peasants out of work, the concentration of production and distribution in the hands of the few. He fully realised that there must be a certain amount of industrialism, but he hoped that, as far as possible, tools and machines should be made for the small, rural community. The wealth of a nation should be maintained, and should be shared by all, not merely by a minority upper class.

The relation which, whether an industrial undertaking is nationalised or privately owned, should exist between employers and employed is, according to him, as follows. Each side should have for the other a feeling of profound sympathy. Management and labour should jointly control the enterprise and, should disagreement arise between them, an impartial tribunal should be set up to give judgement. The wages of all, which should be as nearly

equal as possible, should be sufficient for well being and reasonable comfort and, as the conditions of work should be neither tiring nor conducive to ill health, there should be at the factory facilities for recreation, enough water and satisfactory sanitary arrangements. Employers should provide for the workers, without in any way impairing the freedom of the latter, suitable housing. Workers have the right to form a union, to bargain collectively and, in the event of the management making excessive demands, to strike.

As he of course condemned the class war so vehemently encouraged by the communists, he put forth the ideal of trusteeship. He maintained that the rich should, after having deliberately and gladly lowered their standard of living, use their surplus wealth for the benefit of the workers. That is why he regarded Jesus, who told that young aristocrat to sell up and give to the poor, as the greatest economist of the time. The Indian leader proclaimed, what the Galilean earlier had, that revolution, although inevitable, should be pacific.

Aware that, even after the ideal society has been largely realised and, as a result, the human race has become more content than ever before, crime will, howbeit very much decreased, to some extent persist, he averred that prisons, which will therefore always be necessary, should be envisaged not as institutions for the punishment, the torture of criminals, but as reformatories, educational centres, for the socially maladjusted. Of the immates the jail officials should thus, he thought, be friends, instructors and spiritual advisers. The death penalty should, according to him, be entirely abolished.

He assumed that similarly there will always have to be a police force, but that the members of it should, far from being, as now, protagonists of violence, become a peace brigade, allies of the people. He held that, although these new police might have to be armed to deal with robber, murderer and lunatic, the arms would be taken advantage of as rarely as possible. When used, there would be, as he fully realised, a tragic departure from the ideal of love.

Feeling not only that should a dispute arise or a crime be

committed it ought to be privately and without bitterness settled by the involved parties, but also that, when such a procedure cannot be followed, the panchayat should arbitrate, he was of the opinion that, although state law courts can never be abolished, they should be seldom resorted to and that, if unavoidably availed of, their assistance should be cheap, speedy and efficient.

As India is a land of so many religions, upholders of which are frequently hostile to one another, Gandhi maintained that the State should be devoid of an official theological system, of an established church, that is to say, in matters of metaphysics strictly neutral, but that, when education takes place, pupils should be taught, by means of both the percept and the example of the teachers, the ideology of love which, he averred, is common to all the religions of mankind. In the educational centres, the ashrams, which have been erected in India for promoting the Gandhian way of life, periods, of devotion are, according to Mr. Wilfred Wellock, an authority on the Mahatma, part of the daily routine. Conducted largely by the students themselves, these services usually consist, so Mr. Wellock informs us, of the recital of passages from the scriptures of the world, Moreover half an hour a day is, he says, given in these places to silent, meditative spinning.

Concerning the relation which should exist between nations, Gandhi the pacifist, was of the following opinion. There should be disarmament and a freely created, properly democratic world government. Perhaps one particular nation, distinguished by the heroism and purity of a majority of its members, will have, in order to set the example of practising altruism, to disarm unilaterally. Should one nation invade another, the victims of aggression ought, recalling the technique adopted in India for ousting the British, to resist civilly and without violence. They ought not to adopt a scorched earth policy. They ought neither to destory food crops nor poison wells.

When asked, just before his death, how he would resist the atom bomb, he conversationally replied, thus revealing a belief in telepathy. 'I would meet it by prayerful action. . . . I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face

of evil against him. The pilot would not see my face at such a height, I know. But the longing in our heart that he will not come to harm will reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. Of those thousands who were done to death in Hiroshima by the bombs—if they had died with that prayerful action, died openly with prayer in their hearts without uttering a groan, then the war would not have ended as disgracefully as it has.'

Mahadev Desai, for over twentyfour years the Secretary and chronicler of Gandhi, in fact so able a reporter that he has been called Gandhi's Boswell, has vividly described life at the Sevagram ashram, that establishment which the Mahatma jestingly named a home for invalids, a lunatic asylum, and to which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel referred as the menagerie. On studying the account, one can understand Gandhi's profound compassion for suffering humanity.

Prominent in the crowd of queer lodgers was Bhansali who, at one time a professor at the Gujarat Vidypith and then a jail bird, eventually became a recluse. After having fasted for weeks, this escapist, convinced no doubt that the universe is illusory, maya, entered a forest, where for years he wondered about naked and silent. His diet was raw wheat flour and bitter tasting neem leaves and, lest he should inadvertently speak, he for a period sewed up his lips with a copper ring. At last he chanced to meet Gandhi, who gently nursed him back to normality and as a result, that hater of work, that paragon of morbidity, now decently clad in a loin cloth, not only began to toil for seventeen hours a day, but also filled ashram and neighbourhood with roars of laughter. Determined to be of service to his fellows, he carded cotton, spun and taught. Following the lead of the Mahatma, his master, he shunned possessions and felt at one with the animals. When, occasionally feeling the urge to resume a life of penance, he asked Gandhi for permission to hang upside down, the Mahatma firmly refused such a permit and Bhansali acquiesced.

There was also a Japanese monk who, working like a horse and living like a hermit, did the ashram chores. Morning and evening he beat his drum and chanted the formula. 'Om namyo hom

renge kyom,' which interpreted is, 'I submit myself to the teaching of the Hokekyo Sutra', that is to say, the socalled Lotus Sutra of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. He seemed to practise love more than any of the other inmates and, although some suspected that he was a spy, there was apparently nothing whatever to prove this.

There was a leper too who, once a political prisoner in the Yeravada jail, was a great Sanskrit scholar. After having wandered about four years a miserable, hopeless cast-away, he arrived one day, in order to seek comfort, at the ashram and immediately Gandhi took him in.

There were of course other specimens, but these four must suffice.

Gandhi not only discovered, but also frequently demonstrated the truth that, if you always love your enemy, you will make him admire you and perhaps become your friend, perfect love being atonement. Recall some of the incidents which, despite the greatest possible provocation, he accepted without a trace of malice, without the slightest attempt to retaliate. There were the assault on him by Durban Europeans in 1896, the almost fatal attack by Mir Alam, a Indian extremist, in Johannesburg in 1908, the assult made at Jassidih, Bihar by conservative Hindus in 1934, the bomb affair a few weeks later at Poona, the attack of Muslim rowdies during his evening prayer in 1939 at Rajkot, the assault of Hindu youths in Calcutta in 1947, the bomb affair at the prayer meeting at Birla House, New Delhi, in 1948 and, last but by no means least, his martyrdom there ten days afterwards. on Friday, 30th January, while he was on his way to the prayer ground. 'Jesus Christ', he said to Muslim visitors not long before his death, 'prayed God from the Cross to forgive those who crucified him. It is my constant prayer to God that he may give me the strength to intercede even for my assassin. And it should be your prayer, too, that your faithful servant may be given that strength to forgive': the words, your faithful servant, referring of course to the speaker himself.

Although this great man wanted love to permeate the human race, he had no wish to found an organisation, no desire to add

to the already existing sterile systems of thought yet another. He encouraged his followers to disagree with him, to think for themselves, to be themselves, in fact to become nonconformists, dissent being. to use a phrase of his biographer, Louis Fischer, the hallmark of manhood. 'There is no such thing as Gandhism,' said the Mahatma, 'and I do not want to leave any sect after me. . . . I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. . . . The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final.'

Gandhi's View of Human Nature

RAGHAVAN N. IYER

> What has for centuries raised man above the beast is not the cudgel but an inward music: the irresistible power of unarmed truth, the attraction of its example.
>
> PASTERNAK

Gandhi's indictment of modern civilizatian, his view of politics and especially of social and individual ethics is firmly based upon his assumptions regarding human nature and human perfectibility. He started with a very definite conviction about what man is in his essential nature and of what he becomes through a false view of himself, of what he should be and can become, and of his place in a law-governed comes. All political and social theory must begin with a clear conception of the psychology of man, at least in so far as it affects his conduct and his moral aims in society. Many sociologists, including Durkheim, would not agree with this, but no empirical studies of power relationships can answer the more fundamental questions, involving assumptions and theories regarding human nature, that moral and political philosophers have raised. All the great and effective political thinkers have recognized this, from Plato and Aristotle to Hobbes and Rousseau. Marx's failure to formulate explicitly or even to imply a definite theory of human nature makes it easier for us to regard him as a philosophy and a powerful propagandist rather than as a political thinker, in the strict sense. It is, of course, true that Marx did ask and attempt to answer questions about human nature in his early philosophical writings, but he did not consider them in his later works in which Marxism, as a system, was elaborated. Hobbes began his political theory with a psychological theory, apparently empirical but essentially a prioristic; his mechanistic authoritarian picture of

the state was devised for an irrational, fear-driven, even herd-like, humanity that could be manipulated. Locke, and later on Mill, advocated a mild and minimal role for government on the assumption that man was naturally a harmless and self-improving creature and that his economic aims and activities were automatically helpful to society, while the seventeenth century philosophers whom Locke challenged had proceeded from an opposite assumption.

Political theory which does not start from a theory of human nature tends to become either pretentious or trivial. All this would be regarded by many today as basically uncontroversial. What is not so widely recognized is that the choice between an optimistic conception (from Plato to Rousseau and Helvetius) and a pessimistic view (from St Augustine to Hobbes and Hume) of human nature is logically independent of the choice between an open and a closed view of human nature, or the choice between a view that stresses the variable and one that emphasizes the constant elements in human nature, or again, of the choice between the acceptance and the rejection of the perfectibility of man, or finally, the degree of power and autonomy that is granted to man in relation to Nature (or God) and his material and social environment. Any theory of human nature. as Feuerbach recognized more clearly than perhaps anyone else, must not only point to the essential difference between man and the brute but also between man and God (or Nature). Man is both an observer, standing apparently outside the world and an agent affecting and affected by the world. Man converses with himself but can also put himself in the place of another and his essential nature is an object of thought. A human being, unlike an animal, can formulate and articulate his intention to act for his own benefit or for the good of others, according to his own conception of himself in relation to others as well as his view of the world around him and his expectation of an order of events in the future.

Political and social philosophy involves a search for 'a definition of man' and the major political thinkers differ in the accounts they give of the powers essential to men. This means

both description and prescription; the facts are verifiable but cannot be conclusively settled, the values and choices commended may be defended or disputed in terms of moral principles and human experiences but must in the end be left for each individual to test for himself. Man first of all sees his nature as if out of himself, before he finds it in himself. Man also denies to himself only what he attributes to God or Nature. Alternatively, what a man declares concerning God or Nature, he in truth declares concerning himself. Augustinianism puts God in the place of man; Pelagianism puts man in the place of God. The denial of the divinity of man is usually accompanied with the humanization of God in the image of what man would like to be but could never become. The denial of God tends to lead to the deification of man. In secular philosophies, the elevation of man is usually achieved through a mechanistic conception of nature and the belief that human reason is capable of comprehending and manipulating the world. Alternatively, it is possible to stress the impotence and the irrationality of man in relation to a determinist view of the world or a historicist view of society as an objective and independent reality in time. In any case, it is not easy to dispense with 'the parapolitical myth'[1] regarding man, for it is deeply embedded in our language.

Man and the brute

Where does Gandhi stand in relation to all this? Human nature, he repeatedly asserted, will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to be beastly or brutal.[2] He claimed in 1921 to be 'a fairly accurate student of human nature and vivisector of my own failings. I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds.'[3] In his Autobiography, he declared that the brute by nature knows no self-restraint, and man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint.[4] Elsewhere, he states that the duty of renunciation

1. See Gilbert Ryle, *Dilemmas*, pp. 64-5.
2. *Harijan*, October 1938.
3. *Young India*, July 1921.
4. *Autobiography*, p. 317 (2nd edition in one volume).

differentiates mankind from the beast.[5] Man becomes great exactly to the extent that he works for the welfare of his fellowmen.[6] The differences between men are merely those of degree, not of kind. 'We were, perhaps, all originally brutes. I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute.'[7] To the extent of this Darwinian element in his thought, Gandhi was more a Victorian than a Hindu. Again, 'man must choose either of the courses, the upward or the downward, but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb'.[8] The 'downward instinct' is embodied in all men. Gandhi claimed that he was not a visionary but a practical idealist, and non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute. 'The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.'[9] The moment a man awakens to the spirit within he cannot remain violent.[10] The essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute, and therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man, 'This is the fundamental conception of Hinduism, which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of this truth.'[11]

Man and God

Fundamentally, Gandhi believed in what he called the 'absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What

5. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 81.
6. *Ethical Religion*, p, 56.
7. *Harijan*, April 1938.
8. *Ibid.*, February 1935.
9. *Young India*, August 1920.
10. *Harijan*, August 1940.
11. *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, August 1934.

though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source.'[12] He was fond of quoting the Mohammedan saying: 'Man is not God: but neither is he different from the light (or spark) of God—*adam khuda nahin: lekin khuda ke nur se adam juda nahin.*' The essence of his position is contained in his statement that 'we are born with brute strength but we are born to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation.'[13] Man is bestial in origin, but he is human precisely because he is potentially and essentially divine. It is not that Gandhi offers a simple dualistic view of man, but rather that man is neither brute nor God, but is human in so far as he uniquely possesses the power of choice that determines the increasing brutalization of his nature and a reliance on instinctual violence (reinforced by intellectual violence), or his increasing awareness and manifestation and consequent realization of his innate divinity. To become divine is to come closer in thought, feeling and act to the whole of creation. More specifically, when human nature 'acts equally towards all and in all circumstances, it approaches the divine'.[14]

Gandhi declared explicity that he was a believer in advaita (the Indian doctrine of monism), 'the essential unity of God and man and for that matter of all that lives'.[15] This is similar to the Stoic idea of the universe as a divine whole and of mankind as an essential unity in which the individual could realise himself. Man alone is made in the image of God. 'That some of us do not recognize that status of ours makes no difference, except that then we do not get the benefit of the status, even as a lion brought up in the company of sheep may not know his own status and , therefore, does not receive its benefits; but it belongs to him nevertheless, and the moment he realizes it, he

12. *Young India*, September 1924.
13. *Harijan*, April 1938.
14. *Diary of Mahadev Desai*, p, 247 (July 1932).
15. *Young India*, December 1924.

begins to exercise his dominion over the sheep. But no sheep masquerading as a lion can ever attain the leonine status.'[16] He argued that to prove the proposition that man is made in the image of God, it is surely unnecessary to show that all men admittedly exhibit that image in their own persons. It is enough to show that one man at least has done so. 'And will it be denied that the great religious teachers of mankind have exhibited the image of God in their own persons?'[17] At the same time the hubris of man needs to be corrected by a contemplation of nature. 'When we look at the sky, we have a conception of infinity, cleanliness, orderliness and grandeur which is purifying for us . . . . When once we are in tune with the sky, the nature of our environment on earth ceases to have any significance for us.'[18] Man must adopt a correct posture, neither too high nor too low, as was taught in the *Gita*.

Oneness of humanity

The doctrine of man's oneness with God and humanity has several implications. *First of all*, this doctrine is incompatible with the belief that an individual may gain spiritually and those that surround him suffer. Gandhi believed that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.[19] There is not a single virtue which aims at or is content with the welfare of the individual alone. Conversely, there is not a single moral offence which does not, directly or indirectly, affect many others besides the actual offender. Hence, whether an individual is good or bad is not merely his own concern, but really the concern of the whole community, nay, of the whole world.[20] *Secondly*, the monistic doctrine implies that all human beings are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity.[21] 'I

16. *Ibid.*, July 1926.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Diary of Mahadev Desai*, p. 252 (July 1932).
19. *Young India*, December 1924.
20. *Ethical Religion*, p. 55.
21. *Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government*, 1942-44, p. 69.

believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up.'[22] *Thirdly*, what one man is capable of achieving is possible for all to attain.[23] The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are the same for everyone.[24] Gandhi did not go so far as the Stoics did in regarding man as 'cosmo political', designed to form by deliberate effort a single community with one common law, a 'City of Zeus' or universal communis deorum et hominum civitas. To Gandhi the moral-solidarity of mankind was an ever-present fact rather than merely a contrived political ideal that remains to be realized. 'I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that the primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creations.'[25] *Fourthly*, it is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to attack and resist the author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. 'For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that human being, but with him the whole world.'[26] *Fifthly*. man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see God in creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. 'I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity.'[27] Again, 'true individuality consists in reducing oneself to zero. The secret of the life is selfless service. The highest ideal for us is to become vitaraga (free from attachment). Ethical rules were framed by rishis (seers) on the basis of personal experience. A rishi is one

22. *Young India*, November 1931.
23. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 4. p. 353 (October 1938).
24. *Harijan*, May 1940.
25. *Ibid.*, May 1936.

who has realized things for himself. Sannyasa in the *Gita* is renunciation of actions inspired by desire (kamya). He is a man who is the ruler over his body.'[28]

Clearly, then the divinity of man manifests itself according to the extent to which he realizes his humanity, i.e. his oneness with his fellowmen. For Gandhi, as for Spinoza, men must unite themselves 'by bonds that make all of them as one man'. To Spinoza and Goethe, and to Gandhi, the unity between all men, though veiled from common sight, was in fact as 'real' as the idea of separateness is to a man still under the spell of his senses. Although at times Gandhi spoke of God as a person and the ideal man as a servant (dasa) of God, he really regarded God, as the Stoics did, as an indefinable and universal Power that cannot be conceived apart from humanity or from the whole of nature; each man is a ray or a part (amsa) of that divine Power that underlies all change, that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates[29] all forms of life.

Man and his environment

Every man is born in the world with certain natural tendencies that are variable and alterable, while at the same time he is born with certain definite limitations that he cannot overcome. 'While admitting that man actually lives by habits, I hold that it is better for him to live by the exercise of the will.'[30] Men are capable of developing their will to an extent that will reduce exploitation by others to a minimum and make them capable of self-rule. Man's triumph consists in substituting the struggle for existence with a struggle for mutual service.[31] Man is a thinking no less than a feeling animal. To renounce the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate. Man's estate is one of probation. During that period he

26. *Autobiography*, p. 337.
27. *Harijan*, August 1936.
28. *Diary of Mahadev Desai*, p. 113 (May 1932).
29. *Young India*, October 1928.
30. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 4, p. 13.
31. *Harijan*, June 1935.

is played upon by evil forces as well as good. He is ever a prey to temptations. He has to prove his manliness by resisting and fighting temptations. 'He is no warrior who fights outside foes of his imagination, and is powerless to lift a finger against the innumerable foes within, or what is worse, mistakes them as friends.'[32] In man, reason quickens and guides the feeling; in the brute, the soul ever lies dormant. To awaken the heart is to arouse the dormant soul, to awaken reason and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.[33] The rule of all without the rule of self is 'deceptive and disappointing, as a painted toy mango'.[34]

Gandhi recognized that in spite of the greatest effort to be detached, no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or his upbringing. But he believed that man is essentially capable of self-direction. It is 'man's privilege to overcome adverse circumstances'.[35] Again manliness consists in making circumstances subserve ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach fate, nor to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help blames himself for his failure.[36] He argued that while in the Kali-Yuga the level of practice had deteriorated, the mind of man in history had very much progressed. Practice has not been able to keep pace with the mind. Man has begun to say, 'This is wrong, that is wrong'. Whereas previously he justified his conduct, he now no longer justifies his own or his neighbour's. He wants to set right the wrong, but he does not know that his own practice fails him. The contradiction between his theory and his practice fetters him. His conduct is not governed by logic.[37] Self-direction, for Gandhi involves passing moral judgement on one's own behaviour, justifying or condemning it. But man mistakenly believes he has

32. *Ibid.*, April 1936.
33. *Ibid.*, November 1936.
34. *Ibid.*, March 1936.
35. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 7, p. 267 (October 1946).
36. *Harijan*, June 1936.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 43 (January 1946),

set right what was wrong; he tries, fails and does not always recognize that he has failed. Yet, he progresses at least in so far as he recognizes as wrong what he once regarded as right, and he tries to avoid it, even if he cannot always assess correctly his level of effort and the extent of his failure. What distinguishes man from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane. 'Mankind is at the cross-roads. It has to make its choice between the law of the jungle and the law of humanity.'[38]

Optimism

Gandhi had thus a frankly optimistic view of human nature. 'I am an irrepressible optimist. . . . My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence.'[39] And yet in practice Gandhi was often more inclined to deny a pessimistic view than to uphold a positively optimistic view of human nature. 'I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward',[40] he declared in 1926 and stated the next year: 'Men like me cling to their faith in human nuture . . . all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding'.[41] In fact, it is in moments of trial that human nature shows itself at its best.[42] He said in 1931 that he was more concerned with preventing the brutalization of human nature than with 'preventing the sufferings of my own people. . . . I know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity, but I also know that people who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also. And it cannot be a matter of pleasure to me or anyone else to see human nature dragged in the mire. If we are all sons of the same God, and partake of the same divine essence, we must

38. *Ibid*, pp. 86-87 (March 1946).
39. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 5, p. 17 (December 1938).
40. *Young India*, December 1926.
41. *Ibid.*, February 1927.
42. *Autobiography*, p. 216.

partake of the sin of every person whether he belongs to us or to another race. You can understand how repugnant it must be to invoke the beast in any human being.[43] Though we have the human form, without the attainment of the virtue of non-violence we still share the qualities of 'our remote reputed ancestor, the ourang outang'.[44] In 1938 Gandhi again 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.'[45]

Gandhi's greater concern for the rejection of a pessimistic view than the dogmatic assertion of an optimistic view of human nature can be better understood in the light of Kant's essay, 'On the Radical Evil in Human Nature'. Kant distinguishes between the frailty, the impurity and the depravity of human nature. To Gandhi as to Kant, frailty is an inevitable result of the weakness of the will which could in principle be remedied; impurity is the unfortunate consequence of the fact that even our purest motives are not wholly untainted by considerations other than the highest, while depravity points to the corruption rather than the inherent evil of the human heart. Kant contended that every bad action, when we inquire into its rational origin, must be viewed as if the man had fallen into it directly from a state of innocence through a free exercise of his elective will. Man may fall into evil by seduction, yet the original constitution is adapted to good and it could not be corrupted by any other than man himself, if he is to be held to be accountable for his corruption. We must presuppose that a germ of good has remained in its complete purity, indestructible and incorruptible, and in this way the propensity to evil is compatible with a high view of human nature and a belief in the original capacity for good. The moral culture of man must begin not with improvement of morals but with a transformation of the mind and the training of the will. This is why Gandhi insisted: 'Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth ap-

43. *Young India*, October 1931.
44. *Harijan*, October 1938.
45. *Ibid.* November 1938.

probation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be.'[46]

When Mencius said that human nature is good he was in some degree speaking tautologically, because in the last analysis he seems to have meant by the 'good' that which is in harmony with human nature. Gandhi gets round this difficulty by bringing God into the picture, God taken as equivalent to the oneness of all life. Man is good because he is divine, i.e. capable of realizing his kinship with the whole of creation and especially the rest of humanity. For Gandhi, as for the Confucians, an evil man is one who does not change, not one who cannot be changed. To Mencius a man's nature is naturally good just as water flows naturally downward; this is attested by the fact that man is teachable. The consequence of this doctrine of original goodness is that humanity cannot be divided into good and bad; there are only evil acts, no wholly evil men. Gandhi, however, felt that it was more important at time to combat the doctrine of original sin than to argue for the doctrine of original goodness.

Open views of human nature

At times Gandhi confined himself to pleading for an open rather than a closed and fixed view of human nature and of human possibilities. Human life is a series of compromises, but although it is not always easy to achieve in practice what one holds to be true in theory[47]. it is both unwise and unjustifiable to lower the theoretical ideal of human development. 'Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but shall never cease to strive for it.'[48] The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it. The pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment.[49] Yet, 'ideals must work in practice, otherwise they are not potent'.[50] When a man works for an

46. *Autobiography*, p. 276.
47. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 4, pp. 110-11 (August 1936).
48. *Speeches and Writings*, p. 363, 4th edition (September 1917).
49. *Harijan*, July 1937.
50. *Young India*, January 1921.

ideal, he becomes irresistible.[51] We must believe, if we are to be truly human, that it is more natural to be good than evil, 'though apparently descent is easier than ascent'.[52] 'Who can predict the future?', he asked.[53] The virtue of an ideal lies in its boundlessness. But although religious ideals must thus from their very nature remain unattainable by imperfect human beings, atlhough by virtue of their boundlessness they may seem ever to recede further away from us, the nearer we go to them, still they are closer to us than our very hands and feet because we are more certain of their reality and truth than even our own physical being. 'This faith in one's ideals alone constitutes true life, in fact it is man's all in all.'[54]

Man does not become divine when he personifies the innocence of faith in himself. *Only then does he become truly man.* In our present state, no doubt we are partly men and partly beasts, but in our ignorance and even arrogance we say that we truly fulfil the purpose of our species when we behave like beasts.[55] It is not easy to efface the old samskaras or acquired tendencies of thought and character,[56] but we must reject 'the theory of permanent inelasticity of human nature'.[57] In the last analysis, Gandhi supported his view by his belief, so essential to the Buddha, that 'nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, there is inevitable retrogression.'[58] Man has the 'supreme knack of deceiving himself',[59] and of failing to see that human nature is such that man must either soar or sink.[60] We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future.[61]

51. *Ibid.*, July 1920.
52. *Harijan*, March 1939.
53. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 7, p. 475 (May 1947).
54. *Harijan*, December 1927.
55. *Young India*, March 1922.
56. *Harijan*, October 1934.
57. *Ibid.*, June 1942.
58. *Ibid.*, August 1940.
59. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—the Last Phase*, volume 2, p. 303.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
61. *Ibid.*

Thus Gandhi challenged all lukewarm theories of human nature that stress the possibility and the necessity of achieving an equilibrium or a balance between good and evil tendencies, just as he challenged all lukewarm theories of social equilibrium based upon a balance between the fears and the dreams, the bestial instincts and the moral aspirations of men. To stress the good or the evil is to become inevitably involved in a cumulative process of increasing good or of increasing evil; there can be no stability or certainty or reliability in any intermediate position. If no man is irretrievably evil, it is because it is in principle never too late to reverse the gear or to alter one's course.

In support of Gandhi's view of human nature, it could be argued, as the philosophers of the Enlightenment were apt to do, that man's naturally good (or rational) urges are vitiated not so much by irrational urges, instincts and passions as by the false and even dangerous teaching on man's inherently evil nature; vested interests and tyrannical ambitions find in that theory a justification for their policies of oppression, exploitation and enslavement. To insist on the inherent evil of human nature only serves the evil purposes of cunning and greedy power seekers. Alternatively, it is possible to take a less dramatic view and to argue that a river cannot rise above its course, that it is better to believe in the original goodness than in the original evil of human nature if we wish to transform men and to change society, that an excessive emphasis on the weakness of the flesh could render inert and inoperative the inherent willingness of the spirit. A man's image of himself can, and in fact does, affect him, and therefore even if it is not based on a provable theory, it can, within limits hard to define, produce its own verification. However, in the end it must be admitted that it is difficult to believe in human reason or human goodness without also believing in the rationality and progressive tendency of the universe or of human society if not of the entire course of human history. This is why, although Gandhi appeared at times to be pleading for an open view of human nature, he was really unable to support his doctrine of original goodness or his casti-

gation of original sin without advancing also a theory of human perfectibility, divine grace and the upward tendency of human evolution. Dharma or morality cannot be ultimately divorced from rita or cosmic order. It is not surprising that de Maistre, for instance, who at times refused to admit there being a human nature as such (although he was prepared to believe in the dubious category of national character), also repudiated the basic assumption of the Enlightenment, the rationality of the universe.

Human perfectibility

Man, according to Gandhi, will ever remain imperfect but 'it will always be his part to try to be perfect'.[62] There is nothing at a standstill in nature; only God or the ultimate, transcendental Reality could be motionless; perfect and beyond evolution. Man is characteristically a progressive being, and yet through mental inertia is unable to see that the universally valid rules of conduct are fundamentally simple and easy to carry out.[63] Man believes and lives.[64] and no one dare be dogmatic about the capacity of human nature, in any particular instance, for degradation or exaltation.[65] No human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.[66] 'We must believe that every man can think for himself.'[67] The rationality of human nature is the pre-condition of its theoretical perfectibility. Every individual must be regarded as an end and none as a means. We must assume that every man can understand his own powers by the head and has the heart to realize his faith in himself in practice. Being necessarily limited by the bonds of the flesh, we can attain perfection only after the

62. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 4. p. 13 (December 1934).
63. *Diary of Mahadev Desai*, p. 124 (October 1924).
64. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 4, p. 296 (April 1938).
65. *Harijan*, April 1940.
66. *Young India*, March 1931.
67. *Harijan*, April 1937.

dissolution of the body.[68] Besides, 'where would be room for that constant striving, that ceaseless quest after the ideal that is the basis of all spiritual progress, if mortals could reach the perfect state while still in the body'?[69] By perfectibility on earth is, therefore, meant the possibility of growing towards total awareness of our true nature, which is fundamentally identical with that of every thing that lives.

Gandhi's belief in perfectibility is, in the final analysis, dependent upon his belief in rebirth. Time is no consideration. 'If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time cycle.'[70] 'I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted.'[71] Further, 'if for mastering the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force (nonviolence) that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent.'[72] Thus Gandhi's faith in human perfectibility is not merely a moral conviction but is ultimately based upon mataphysical beliefs that all men are not ready to accept. But he was not so naive as to think that men could be transformed overnight. 'All men are imperfect, and when imperfection is observed in someone in a larger measure than in others, people are apt to blame him. But this is not fair. Man can change his temperament, can control it, but cannot eradicate it. God has not given him so much liberty. If the leopard can change spots, then only can man modify the peculiarities of his spiritual constitution.'[73] In fact, we must not only recognize that man is born to make mistakes but we should magnify our own errors

68. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 5, pp. 392-3 (August 1940).
69. *Young India*, volume 3, p. 940.
70. *Harijan*, June 1935.
71. *Young India*.
72. *Harijan*, March 1936.
73. *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 212.

so as to be deterred from falling into them again.[74] We must be conscious of the fallibility of human nature and this must make us humble, without destroying our confident conviction in the truth as we see it.[75]

74. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, volume 7, p. 103 (April 1946).
75. *Harijan*, June 1935.

Gandhi and the Commissars

HOMER A. JACK

When former Soviet Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin and Communist Party Chief Nikita S. Khrushchev came to India in November 1955 the day after their arrival in New Delhi they visited Rajghat, the place where Gandhi was cremated. The Russian leaders took off their shoes, silently went up to the simple cement platform, placed a wreath, and probably walked around it once clockwise—as pilgrims from all over India have done in increasing numbers since 1948.[1] And during their trip through India, Bulganin and Khruschev on more than one occasion compared Gandhi to Lenin.

Can Gandhi be compared to Lenin—or Stalin? Would Gandhi be comfortable if he knew? What did Gandhi in his lifetime think of the communists? And what have the Russian and Indian communists themselves thought of Gandhi? The easy and eager identificatcn of Gandhi with Lenin by some communists makes its necessary and appropriate to dredge up this aspect of Indian history.

While Gandhi (1869-1948) was a contemporary of Lenin (1870-1924) and Stalin (1871-1953), he never personally encountered these two communist leaders. Gandhi studied in London only a decade after Karl Marx died, but he never read his works systematically until the nineteen-forties. Then he did so out of courtesy to his socialist and communist friends. Between 1942-1944, while in detention in the Aga Khan Palace in Poona, Gandhi read Marx's *Capital* and, according to his secretary, Pyarelal, went through some of the other writings of Marx and also of Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He apparently read some books about the communists in China also.[2] After reading these

1. *The New York Times*, 20 November 1955.
2. 'Gandhi's Communism', by Pyarelal. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.

volumes—at the age of 74—Gandhi commented about Marx: 'I could have written it better, assuming, of course, I had the leisure for study Marx had put in.'[3] In 1946, Gandhi was asked a further opinion about Marx. After admitting that he finally read *Capital*, he said that he entertained high regard for the great industry and acumen of Marx. He added, however, that he could not believe Marx's conclusion. He had no faith in violence being able to usher in nonviolence. He felt that world thought was moving and thus out-dating Marx. This did not, however, detract from the merit of the great man's labours.[4]

Gandhi never said much about Lenin. However in 1928 he told a group of Indian students that 'the Bolshevik ideal . . . sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go vain; the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes'.[5] About Stalin also Gandhi was fairly silent. Writting an open letter to the Czechs in 1938, he said: 'Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what Russian dictatorship will mean to the world.'[6] However, almost a decade latter, in 1946, he asserted that he could 'not pass judgment on a great people and a great man like Stalin. I lack the data.'[7]

Gandhi was however not silent about communism. Indeed, among his voluminous writings, communists can find isolated phrases which would appear to indicate that, at times, he approved of communism. On occasion he called himself a communist. In 1931 he told a group of communist workers in Bombay: 'I am trying my best to live up to the ideal of communism in the best sense of the term.'[8] Also in 1931, when a group of communists came to visit him, he confessed: 'You will recognize

3. *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, by D.G. Tendulkar. Vols. 1-8. Bombay.
4. Paraphrased in *Mahatma*, Vol. 7, p. 36.
5. *Mahatma*, Vol. 2, p. 439.
6. *Mahatma*, Vol. 4, p. 341.
7. *Mahatma*, Vol. 7, p. 248.
8. *Mahatma*, Vol. 3, pp. 87-88.

that I am, so to say, a "foundation member" of your peasants' and workers' republic.'[9] In 1938 he said that while most communists believed in violence, some he knew would 'not hurt a fly but believe in the universal ownership of instruments of production. I rank myself as one among them.'[10] And in 1948 he told Louis Fischer that 'I call myself a communist also'.[11] As far the rare occasions when communists identified themselves with him, he rarely protested. Mashruwala reminds us that Gandhi was not in the habit of rejecting descriptions of him or his principles, if they were meant as compliments, and if they helped his main mission'.[12]

Gandhi identified himself with communism at times because of the alleged or real, concern by some communists for the oppressed, for equality, and for opposition to the excesses of capitalism. He felt that 'the contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their countrymen—the city-dwellers.'[13] He once said: 'I do not care whether Marxism is right or wrong. All I know is that the poor are being crushed. Something has got to be done for them. To me this is axiomatic'.[14] And so he was sympathetic to the efforts of the Indian communists to make for greater equality, especially through the abolition of private property and the advent of a classless society. He felt the communist goal of a classless society was 'an ideal that is worth striving for'.[15] He welcomed the idea that 'no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people'.[16] Gandhi ran his various ashrams and other institutions, according to Pyarelal, roughly using the communist principle of 'to each according to his need, from

9. *Young India*, 2 April 1931.
10. *Mahatma*, vol. 4. pp. 314-86.
11. Reported by Pyarelal in *Harijan*, 4 August 1946.
12. *Gandhi and Marx*, by K. G. Mashruwala. Ahmedabad. 1951. p. 37.
13. 'Gandhi's Communism', by Pyarelal. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
14. *Mahatma*, vol. 6, p. 293.
15. Quoted in *The India of My Dreams*, by R. K. Prabhu. 1947. p. 99.
16. *Ibid.*

each according to his capacity'.[17] In 1928 he told the students of the Gujarat Vidyapith that Bolshevism 'aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion there would be nothing like it.'[18] On another occasion he asked: 'What does communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society—an ideal worth striving for. . . . The ideal of inequality, of "high and low", is an evil.'[19]

Thus Gandhi generally approved of the communist goal of opposing capitalism. He wrote: 'In the struggle between capital and labour, it may be generally said that more often than not the capitalists are in the wrong box.'[20] In 1939 he said: 'I desire to end capitalism almost, if not quite, as much as the most advanced socialist, or even communist.'[21]

In addition to these goals of communism, he frankly admired certain qualities he found in some Indian communists he knew. In 1927, in an interview with a communist member of parliament, Gandhi admitted that 'his sincerity is transparent, his sacrifices are great, his passion for the poor unquestioned.'[22] And in 1928 he told a group of Indian students: There is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given their all for its sake.'[23] The communists were revolutionaries and Gandhi prided himself also on being a revolutionary: 'Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary—a nonviolent revolutionary.'[24] Because communists were also revolutionaries, he

17. 'Gandhi's Communism', by Pyarelal. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
18. *Mahatma*, vol. 2, pp. 438-39.
19. *Harijan*, 13 March 1937.
20. *Young India*, 1 June 1921.
21. *Harijan*, 16 December 1939.
22. *Mahatma*, vol. 2, pp. 336-37.
23. *Mahatma*, vol. 2, p. 439.
24. *Young India*, 26 November 1931.

was drawn to them, but he disliked their alleged monopoly. He once told some communists: 'I made the working men's cause my own long before any of the young communists here were born.'[25]

For every once that Gandhi seemingly approved of the goals of communists, thrice or four times he frankly disapproved of both the ends and means of communism. He disliked its materialistic emphasis. Gandhi, for all his practicality, was not a worshipper of things. Thus he once wrote that 'Bolshevism is the necessary result of modern materialistic civilization. Its insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon materialistic advancement as the goal and which has lost all touch with the final things of life.'[26] Thus he disliked the professed atheism of communism. He once said: 'In so far as [communism] is based on . . . denial of God, it repels me.'[27]

Gandhi also disliked the industrial emphasis of communism. He once told his friend, M. Frydman, a Polish engineer, who lived with him: 'As I look at Russia where the apotheosis of industrialism has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. . . . It is beneath human dignity to lose individuality and become a mere cog in the machine.'[28] He also opposed communism because it was too Russian and not eastern enough. He once complained that the Indian communists 'seem to take their instructions from Russia, which they regard as their spiritual home rather than India. I cannot countenance this dependence on an outside power. . . . I would accept [foreign ideologies] only to the extent that I can assimilate them and adapt them to the Indian scene.'[29] In 1934 he warned: Let us not be obsessed with catch-wards and seductive slogans imported from the west. Have we not our distinct eastern tradition? . . . Let us study our eastern institutions in the spirit of scientific inquiry and we shall

25. *Mahatma*, vol. 3, pp. 87-88.
26. *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, by Louis Fischer. New York. 1950. p. 178.
27. *Young India*, 11 December 1924.
28. *Mahatma*, vol. 5, p. 11.
29. *Harijan*, 6 October 1946.

evolve a truer socialism and a truer communism than the world has yet dreamed of. It is surely wrong to presume that western socialism or communism is the last word on the question of mass poverty.'[30] Gandhi also disliked the swift changes in the communist line. Once in a letter to a communist leader, he took the Indian communists to task for supporting Word War II. He wrote: 'I suggest that the title "people's war" is highly misleading. . . . I suggest too that Russia's limited alliance with the allied powers cannot by any stretch of imagination convert what was before an imperialistic war against the Nazi combine into a people's war.'[31]

Gandhi also disliked the bad manners he saw in the communists. In 1931 when he was talking in the working-class area of Bombay, some communists forced their way into the meeting and placed the red flag on the dais. They baited Gandhi and his speech was interrupted from time to time by the communist youths. He lectured to them: 'Communism does not exclude courtesy. . . . You may deal destruction to bring the couutry round to your view. But how many will you destroy? I ask you to convert the [Indian National] Congress if you can and to take charge of it. But you cannot do so by bidding good-bye to the elementary rules of courtesy. And there is no reason why you should be lacking in courtesy, when it is open to you to give vent to your views, when India is tolerant enough to listen to anyone who can talk coherently.'[32]

Gandhi soon perceived the totalitarian nature of communism, and its lack of personal freedom distressed him. Unlike the communists, Gandhi's prime concern was for the individual. He once said, 'The individual is the one supreme consideration . . . I look upon an increase of the power of the state with the greatest fear, because although apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by

30. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5 August 1954.
31. *Mahatma*, vol. 6, p. 331.
32. *Mahatma*, vol. 3, pp. 87-88.

destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.'[33] Repeatedly, therefore, he denounced Russian dictatorship.

Gandhi opposed the hatred engendered by the communists. He was a peacemaker and he insisted that peace could not be achieved in an atmosphere of hate. He told some communists in 1931, 'I do not bear any ill to the capitalists. I can think of doing them no harm. But I want by means of suffering, to awaken them to their sense of duty.'[34] He was on the side of labour, but he refused to incite labour against capital. Indeed, Gandhi did not feel that class conflict was inevitable—as did Marx. He was asked if class war could be avoided. He affirmed that it could, adding, 'by the nonviolent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism'.[35] He felt that human existence is basically harmonious, not conflicting. Thus he admitted: 'I am not ashamed to own that many capitalists are friendly towards me and do not fear me.'[36] Indeed, he was assassinated on the grounds of the house owned by G.D. Birla, one of the leading capitalists of India, whose hospitality he accepted for many months, and yet whose economics he basically opposed.

Gandhi's chief criticism of communism was its method of violence. He felt that there can be 'no wall of separation between means and ends'.[37] Elsewhere he said that 'our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.'[38] He felt that the communists 'do not make any distinction between fair and foul, truth and falsehood'.[39] In 1924 he wrote that he was 'uncompromisingly an opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of

33. *Young India*, 13 November 1924 and *The Modern Review*, October 1935.
34. *Mahatma*, vol. 3, pp. 87-88.
35. *Young India*, 26 March 1931,
36. *Harijan*, 16 December 1939.
37. *Young India*, 17 July 1924.
38. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 August 1933.
39. *Harijan*, 6 October 1946.

causes'.[40] He was shocked to discover in some communist literature that 'secrecy' camouflage, and the like are enjoined as necessary for the accomplishment of communism'.[41] In 1931 he told a group of communists that they 'do not put the same stress as I do on the means'.[42] At another time he admitted: 'Our methods differ, our languages differ.'[43]

While Gandhi admitted that 'violence is no monopoly of any one party,'[44] he objected to communism chiefly on this ground. He once said that 'in so far as [communism] is based on violence . . . it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success.'[45] Elsewhere he said: 'From what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same.'[46] At a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay in August 1942, Gandhi recalled that Nehru told him 'something about the Russian revolution', but he felt that 'in as much as these struggles [also the French revolution] were fought with the weapon of violence, they failed to realize the democratic ideal'.[47] In the course of refuting the arguments of one communist, he uttered his aphorism: 'Those who seek to destroy men rather than their manners, adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men.'[48] In 1934 he said: 'There is . . . really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself.'[49] In 1937 he said that he had to 'part company' with communism because of its use of force, for he did 'not believe in eradicating evil from

40. *Young India*, 11 December 1924.
41. *Harijan*, 10 December 1930.
42. *Mahatma*, vol. 4, pp. 384-86.
43. *Harijan*, 16 December 1939.
44. *Mahatma*, vol. 4, pp. 384-86.
45. *Young India*. 11 December 1924.
46. *Mahatma*, vol. 2, pp. 438-439.
47. *Mahatma*, vol. 6, p. 189.
48. *Mahatma*, vol. 2, pp. 336-37.
49. *Young India*. 11, December 1924.

the human breast at the point of the bayonet.'[50] Also in 1937 he said: 'I believe in nonviolent communism. If communism came without any violence, it would be welcome.'[51]

At various times Gandhi made comments about communism in Russia—and India. He opposed generally the communist regime in Russia. However, he had affection for Russia, since it was the homeland of Leo Tolstoy, with whom he corresponded in the years just before the latter's death in 1910, and to whom he was indebted for borrowing insights which went into his method of satyagraha. In 1926 Gandhi wrote: 'Let no one think that the people in Russia, Italy, and the other countries are happy or are independent.'[52] In 1928 he likewise said: 'I have no hesitation in saying that that the Bolshevik regime, in its present form, cannot last long. For . . . nothing enduring can be built on violence.'[53] On the other hand, at an education conference in Wardha in 1937 he said: 'I would be the last to minimize the achievement of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence.'[54] In 1946 a journalist asked him: 'What do you think of Russia?' Gandhi replied: 'Russia is an enigma to me. It hurts me to think, if the reports are true, that a country which stood for the people has turned into an imperialist power.'[55]

As to the applicability of communism to India, Gandhi had several comments. In 1921 he wrote: 'India does not want Bolshevism. The people are too peaceful to stand anarchy. They will bow the knee to anyone who restores so-called order.'[56] In 1937 he was asked whether he felt communism would be good for India. He answered: 'Communism of the Russian type, that is, communism which is imposed on a people, would be repugnant

50. *Harijan*, 13 March 1937.
51. *Harijan*, 13 February 1937.
52. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
53. *Young India*, 15 November 1928.
54. *Mahatma*, vol. 4, p. 236.
55. *Mahatma*, vol. 7, p. 248.
56. *Young India*, 24 November 1921.
57. *Harijan*, 13 February 1937.

to India.'[57] In 1940 he said much the same thing: 'I may say that communists have not made much headway yet in India, and I somehow feel that the character of our people will not easily lend itself to communist methods. [58] In 1942 he wrote: 'India is not like . . . Russia and . . . revolutionary activity is suicidal, at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time, in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.'[59]

Whatever Gandhi thought about communism generally and about communism in India, communists made efforts to convert him and he made efforts to convert them. He opposed 'those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me'.[60] In 1927 an Indian communist tried to convert Gandhi. He answered 'the impatient comrade' and reported that 'his facts are fiction and his deductions based upon fiction are necessarily baseless. . . . I am sorry, but we stand at opposite poles.'[61] When Louis Fischer told him that 'the Indian communists want communism of the Stalin type in India and want to use your name for that purpose, Gandhi simply replied, 'they won't succeed'.[62]

If the communists could not make Gandhi toe the communist line, he never ceased trying to convert them. His was the dictum of hating evil but not the evil-doer. He once said: 'All communists are not bad, as all Congressmen [members of the Indian National Congress] are not angels. I have, therefore, no prejudice against communists as such.'[63] In 1924 he said: 'My creed of nonviolence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning them from what appears to me to be their error.'[64] In

58. *Harijan*, 13 April 1940.
59. *Harijan*, 12 July 1942.
60. *Young India*, 11 December 1924.
61. *Young India*, 17 March 1927.
62. *Harijan*, 4 August 1946.
63. Louis Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
64. *Young India*, 11 December 1924.

1938 some Indian communists came to Sevagram presumably on a mission of peace. Gandhi argued with them, but ended on this note: I want to occupy a corner in your hearts if I can.' Since they distrusted him, Gandhi made them 'a sporting offer'. He said: 'One of you or all of you can come to me at Sevagram, study me, see all my papers, look at the correspondence, ask me questions, and decide upon the course you would adopt in your dealings with me. There is no secrecy with me.'[65] And in 1946 he said: 'I have friends among [the communists]. Some of them are like sons to me.'[66]

Whatever Gandhi's personal feelings were towards communism, an aphorism has emerged that 'Gandhism is communism minus violence' (another form is 'Gandhism is communism plus God'). Vinoba Bhave, a long-time disciple of Gandhi, feels that Gandhism and communism are two 'irreconcilable' ideologies and comments: 'These two "irreconcilable" ideologies are so physically alike that one could have well served as the double of the other in a political fraud. But there was a slight difference. One breathed, the other did not. The result was that a dinner was being prepared for the one and a coffin for the other. The likeness between these two ideologies [Gandhism and communism] bereft of this trivial (!) difference of ahimsa is similar to the above pair of doubles.'[67] The late K. G. Mashruwala, writing a whole book on *Gandhi* and *Marx*, also strenuously objected to the identification of Gandhi with Marx—or with Lenin or Stalin. He wrote: 'When it is said that Gandhism is communism minus violence, the impression created is that the "minus violence" factor in communism is some small impurity the removal of which will make it the same as Gandhism. The "minus violence" factor is a major factor of considerable value. The implications of "minus violence" are so great as to make the equation as illusory as to say that red is green minus yellow and blue, or a worm is a snake minus poison.'[68]

65. *Mahatma*, vol. 4, pp. 384-86.
66. *Harijan*, 6 October 1946.
67. Mashruwala, p. 17.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.

If Gandhism is the antithesis of communism, it is also opposed to capitalism-cum-democracy. Gandhism is opposed to both communism and capitalism in the great importance both of the latter attach to centralized control of capital and land, of industry and agriculture. Indeed, Mashruwala concludes that 'the difference between Gandhism and Marxism is great, but greater still is the difference between Gandhism and unbridled capitalistic, feudal and caste orders.[69]

What have the communists in Russia thought about Gandhi and Gandhism? As far back as 1920, the First World Congress of the Communist International meeting in Moscow, said this about Gandhism: 'Tendencies like Gandhism in India, thoroughly imbued with religious conceptions, idealize the most backward and economically most reactionary forms of social life, see the solution of the social problem not in proletarian socialism, but in a reversion to these backward forms, preach passivity and repudiate the class struggle, and in the process of the development of the revolution become transformed into an openly reactionary force. Gandhism is more and more becoming an ideology directed against mass revolution. It must be strongly combated by communism.'[70] In 1928, at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, a resolution was passed entitled 'The Revolutionary Movement for the Colonies and Semi-Colonies'. This resolution stated that 'even such movements as Gandhism in India, Sun-Yat-Senism, Sarekat Islam in Indonesia, were originally radical petty-bourgeois ideological movements which became converted into a bourgeois nationalist-reformist movement'. Elsewhere the resolution indicated that 'the communists must unmask the notional reformism of the Indian National Congress and oppose all the phrases of the Svarajists. Gandhists, etc., about passive resistance'.[71]

From this points onwards, the communist International left it to the Indian communists themselves to judge—and often

69. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
70. Quoted in *The Communist Party of India*, by M. R. Masani. New York: Macmillan, 1954. 302 pp. pp, 20-21.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.

denounce—Gandhi and Gandhism. M. R. Masani in his study of Moscow-originated statements on India and Gandhi concludes that 'Gandhi represents the complete antithesis to the communist and has been recognised as such in the Moscow press and radio for over three decades,'[72]

A recent edition (1954) of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* contains these words about Gandhi: 'Author of the reactionary teachings of Gandhism; he actively helped British imperialism by organizing and leading an Indian sanitary unit which served the British Army. . . . When the popular movement appeared to become a revolutionary one, Gandhi betrayed the people and helped the imperialists against the people, in which they saw the main enemy. . . . He pretended in a demogogic way, to be a supporter of Indian independence and an enemy of the British.' In another article the *Encyclopaedia* reports: 'Gandhism widely exploits religious prejudices and the Hindu dogma about the unconditional subordinational of the lower to the upper class and also the dogma about the "sinfulness" of any attempt to change the present hierarchy of castes, which they allege has been establish by the will of God.'[73],[74]

This description of Gandhi, given in an official encyclopaedia which in the past accurately reflected official government policy shocked the Indian people (who were, in part, told of this article by a booklet issued by the U.S. Information Service). The Indian government made an official approach to the Soviet Embassay in New Delhi to amend the article. In other instances, Soviet literary judgements reportedly have been amended by the use of paste-over sheets for large volumes which can't easily be destroyed or reprinted. A spokesman for the Soviet cultural

72. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
73. The *New York Times*. 28 October 1954, p. 15; also *Time*, 8 November 1954, p. 46.
74. The Soviet 'Diplomatic Dictionary', published in 1950 and edited by Andrei Vishinsky, said some derogatory things about Mr Nehru. He is called the one who 'tried to involve India in the orbit of the Anglo-American bloc' and charged his government with being 'frightened of the growth of the democratic movement' in India. (*The New York Times*, 30 October 1951, p. 16,)

delegation who was in India at the time admitted that a move to amend the remarks about Gandhi would be made when the delegation returned to Russia.

At least once before the Russians had difficulties with the Indians over Gandhi. In 1951 an Indian cultural mission went to Moscow. During a performance, a Russian in the audience asked an Indian comic what the difference was between Gandhism and communism. The comic replied, 'while Gandhism travelled in a bullock cart, Russian communism travelled in an airplane'. This witticism somehow angered the communist interpreter who refused to translate this answer, asserting: 'Gandhism is not as great as communism'. Upon learning this the Indian performers refused further invitations to perform and even declined—Gandhi-like—to accept food. The next day the interpreter apologized to them. Later the Indian leader of this delegation told his fellow-Indians in New Delhi: 'The incident was a blessing in disguise because it gave an opportunity for members of the group to demonstrate the great esteem in which Gandhi is held by the Indian people.'[75]

But what do the Indian communists themselves think of Gandhi? In the early 1930s, when Gandhi was having success with his several satyagraha campaigns, the Indian communists did not cooperate. According to Masani, the communists in India 'not only held aloof from this anti-imperialist struggle but did everything they could to weaken and sabotage it. While love of Indian-made cloth and goods was sweeping the land, they sported suits made of foreign cloth as a gesture of solidarity with the British workers in Lancashire. When the people were being educated by Gandhi in the methods of nonviolent resistance, they asserted academically the right to use violence.'[76] In 1930 *Pravda* published a 'Platform of Action of the C. P. of India'. This especially denounced Gandhi, asserting: 'The policy of Gandhism, on which the progress of the Congress is founded uses a cloak of vague talk about love, weakness, modest and

75. *The New York Times*, 24 October 1951, p. 4.
76. Masani, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

hardworking existence, lightening the burden of the peasantry, national unity, the special historic mission of Hindustan, etc. But under this cloak it preaches and defends the interests of the Indian capitalists, the inevitability and the wisdom of the division of society into rich and poor, eternal social inequality and exploitation.'[77]

In 1934 the Indian communists started a 'League Against Gandhi', but it did not last long and only succeeded in alienating people.[78] Then began a series of gyrations of the communist line. For a while the Indian communists tried to establish a united front with Congress and then, when 'the imperialist war' became 'the people's war' in Europe, the Indian communists overnight opposed Gandhi and the Indian National Congress. They condemned the 'Quit India' campaign of the Congress and battled on the side of the British. They also supported the demand for Pakistan, which Gandhi tenaciously opposed, and even asserted that every linguistic group in India had a distinct nationality and thus had the right to secede. However, by 1944 the Indian communists were so discredited that they followed the Indian version of the Earl Browder line in America in an effort to acquire respectability. Thus when Gandhi was unconditionally released from detention in 1944, the Indian communists tried to make up to him. They arranged for him a private showing of the film, *Mission to Moscow*, but Gandhi seems not to have been impressed.[79]

Even after Gandhi's death in 1948, the Indian communists tried to make use of his prestige. They tried to infiltrate into the ranks of Gandhi's followers and to claim that they were his real heirs. The All-India Peace Council requested the World Peace Council to allow it to observe the death anniversary of Gandhi in 1951. The international Cultural Commission of the World Peace Council was not exactly enthusiastic about this suggestion, but the All-India Peace Council celebrated the anniversary anyway for the next several years. However, when the Third Cong-

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-43.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

ress of the Indian Communist Party convened in 1953, the Politbureau's Review Report included Gandhism as one of the 'reserves of the ruling class' in these terms: 'Far more serious than the direct organizational hold of the Congress or Nehru, however, is the hold of the Gandhian ideology, which is still powerful among the mass of the people. . . . It should be particularly borne in mind that more than three decades of Gandhian leadership in the national democratic movement have created a tradition of particular forms of struggle which have affected large masses of workers, peasants and the middle class.'[80]

New Age, the monthly 'opinion' magazine of the Indian Communist Party, ran a series of seven articles[81] on Gandhi and Gandhism, beginning in July 1954. The author was E M.S. Namboodiripad, well-known Indian communist. In the summer of 1955, he became acting secretary-general of the Indian Communist Party while secretary-general A.K. Ghosh was taking treatment in Russia, and since has become head of the communist government of the State of Kerala.

Mr. Namboodiripad began his articles by reviewing the life of Gandhi, basing it upon the eight-volume biography of Gandhi, entitled *Mahatma*. Half-way through the first article he tried to make a class analysis of Gandhi's first satyagraha struggles in South Africa at the turn of the century. He commented that 'the great mass of the people show marvels of heroism and sacrifice, but a few leaders at the top plan and direct the movement along the path which they think best.' He also noted the 'settlements

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-85.

81. (1) 'The Birth of Gandhism', *New Age*, July 1954, pp. 43-54.
(2) 'Nonviolent Non-Cooperation; The Technique of the Indian Bourgeoisie', *New Age*, August 1954, pp. 34-48.
(5) 'Gandhi Retires from Congress', *New Age*, December 1954, pp. 22-23.
(6) 'Gandhi and Subhas Bose in the Final Phase of the Freedom Struggle', *New Age*, May 1955, pp. 12-20.
(7) 'Gandhism's Triumph or Defeat?', *New Age*, June 1955, pp. 16-23.
This author was unable to secure the third and fourth articles in the series.

arrived at with the authorities without the knowledge or consent of the mass of the people who participated in the struggle, some of whom opposed it when its terms became known'.

Mr. Namboodiripad also commented on 'the extremely reactionary social outlook which guided Gandhi throughout his activities'. He felt that his 'total indifference to, if not contempt for, the radical thinking of his London days', when he studied law there from 1888-1891, therefore 'stands in marked contrast to Marx, Engels, and Lenin'. Reminding his readers that Lenin was a contemporary of Gandhi, Lenin—the young lawyer—was translating Marx and Sidney Webb while Gandhi—also a young lawyer—was writing articles for *The Vegetarian*! 'Lenin combined the milltant mass movement of the working class with the most advanced ideology; Gandhi combined it with the most reactionary and obscurantist of ideologies that was current in contemporary world.'

The first article concluded with—to the author—a dilemma. There is a Gandhi who 'tries his best to convince his followers that the way to end exploitation is not militant struggle against it, but serving its war and oppression.' There is also a Gandhi who 'in the name of opposing imperialist exploitation denounces all that is modern, scientific and progressive in human civilization'. But the key to the dilemma Namboodiripad found in Gandhi's class origin: a man 'thrown up by the class which was then rising in Indian society—the Indian bourgeoisie'. He felt that 'this man and, through him, the class which gave him birth tried to mould the destiny of the nation for more than thirty years'.

The author gave evidences, for all his scientific materialism, of marvelling at Gandhi's touch: 'How is it possible for the anti-imperialist national movement of a whole sub-continent to be based on such slogans as love, truth and nonviolence—slogans which can certainly rouse millions in such religious movements as have been led by a Buddha, a Christ, or a Mohammed? He concluded that these semi-religious' slogans were bourgeois. Also Gandhi's 'sympathies lay' on the side of the moderates in Indian politics. But Gandhi was 'different from both the mode-

rates as well as the extremists' His difference and superiority lay in basing himself 'on the pulse of the common people'.

Next the author analyzed the Congress resolution of 1920 on nonviolent non-coopration. He felt that the Program showed its 'essential class political character'. Gandhi and the Congress were content to irritate, harass, embarrass and inconvenience the British bureaucracy, but their program did not 'even to the slightest extent shake the essential basis of imperialist rule.'

Thus Namboodiripad put his finger on Gandhi's principal method. 'The much-talked-of abhorrence of violence is nothing but bourgeoisie's natural fear that, once the working class enters the field of political action with its own weapon of struggle—the weapon of political general strike—the movement will go beyond the limit set by the bourgeoisie. That is why Gandhi shudders at the few incidents of violence which break out when the common people, the workers and peasants, enter the field of action as an organized political force.'

For all this criticism, Namboodiripad commended Gandhi for his understanding of Indian politics on the eve of Indian inependence and thereafter—1947. He submitted that Gandhi had no personal axe to grind; that he represented the bourgeois class as a whole and not an individual or a group among the bourgeoisie; and that therefore he was 'able to look at every problem from the point of view of the long-range interests of his class as a whole, rather than from the narrow, petty, personal or group interest of sections of the bourgeoisie'. But Gandhi, for all his ability to look at problems, could not comprehend the madness after the partition of India and Pakistan. And, the author observed 'herein lies the limitation of the greatness of Gandhi, the leader of the Indian bourgeoisie. Circumscribed as his vision was by the world outlook of the bourgeoisie, he was unable to see that neither the deterioration in communal relations nor the degeneration of the Congress on the eve and after the transfer of power was accidental, but the result of the operation of certain laws of social development.'

The functionary of the Indian Communist Party ended his long analysis by observing that Gandhi 'who began with the assump-

tion of the essential goodness of individuals ended up with the theory of men having run mad and deteriorated' during the communal riots following partition. Thus Gandhi himself, before his assassination, freely admitted that his mission in life was a failure. And Namboodiripad finally concluded: 'No better, no more convincing a verdict can be given of the triumph of Gandhism as the political strategy and tactics of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the British but at the same time of the total failure of Gandhism as a new social philosophy, a new method to regenerate man.'

Not content with this formal delineation of Gandhi and Gandhism, I had an interview with Mr. Namboodiripad in August 1955 when he had just assumed the acting secretaryship of the Indian Communist Party. He received me in the large party headquarters on the edge of a park which separates Old Delhi from New Delhi.

He admitted that the communist line on Gandhi was being reviewed. He said the only public evidence was a Reuters dispatch, but they are in fact restudying their earlier assessment of many Asian leaders. They reassessed Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, but without any pressure to do so. Pressure from the Indian government is not making them restudy Gandhi. Rather, in view of the Asian-African Conference at Bandung, and the role of Mr Nehru in modern Asian history, they were restudying the role of all of the Asian leaders, living and dead.

I asked Mr Namboodiripad if the *Soviet Encyclopaedia* does produce a new conclusion, will he and other Indian communists automatically agree. He answered: 'That depends; if they come to different conclusions, we will study their conclusions and we may agree or disagree.' He implied that the *Encyclopaedia* contains articles but not necessarily official views.

Answering another question, he suggested that many present leaders of the Indian Communist Party were once close to Gandhi, since the leaders of the Central Committee were workers within the Indian National Congress at one time or another before independence. But he reiterated that Gandhi's constructive program 'in general was a method to divert the people's

attention from the real problem'. He felt that the constructive program only helps the people 'in a small way since it gives relief but constitutes no basic change'. He said that continuing Gandhian work against untouchability was good, but that basic education had 'too much fad in it and didn't raise the cultural level of the students'.

As for communist use of satyagraha, he admitted that they will use 'whatever method helps mobilize people and bring them into action'. What method they actually adopt 'depends upon particular circumstances'. They officially called for 'police action' to wrest Goa from Portugal, since the latter has invaded Indian soil and 'we have every right to chuck them out'. However, the Indian Communist Party joined other political groups of India in an all-party committee and have no hesitation to use mass satyagraha in this instance of joint strategy.

When both Gandhi and Stalin were alive, Louis Fischer wrote a small book comparing these two men. His antithesis follows: 'In Joseph Stalin, communist dictator, autocrat of all the Russians, organizing genius, master of power, politics is ends. The means do not matter. . . . In Mahatma Gandhi, saint, statesman, seer, idealistic socialist, pacifist, politics and principles are one. These two men are separated by sharply divergent attitudes towards men, means and words. . . . Gandhi often blames himself; Stalin blames others. Gandhi is generous to opponents and tries to convert them. Stalin suppresses them. Stalin gets obedience. Gandhi gets love and loyalty.'

Gandhi and the Future of World Peace

J. B. KRIPALANI

We are living to day in an age of conflicts—conflicts within each nation and in the international world. Within the nations there are the problems of castes and economic classes, of the haves and have-nots, which some people feel can be solved only through civil strife. Then there are the problems of the rights of religious and racial minorities; in some countries, as in South Africa, it is not minority but majority rights that are at stake. Further there is the question whether democracy is not a tardy and slow-moving machine, and whether things cannot be ordered more quickly and efficiently under military dictatorship or under a dictatorship of the right or the left. It is becoming more and more difficult for people concerned with their immediate needs and handicaps in life to realize that in the long run democracy is a more stable, progressive and educative form of government than autocracy or dictatorship. In the international field there are the problems of imperialism and colonialism of the old and the new communist varieties and of countries forcibly divided and kept divided, of armaments of a nature which if used will destroy all the progress that humanity has made through the centuries and even destroy mankind overnight. For these and many other national and international problems which keep coming up there seems to be no solutions in sight. As a matter of fact, today there are only problems and no solutions! The old, ultimate solution through violence and war is neither desirable nor practical. War today is a spent-out historical device for establishing right and justice. Whatever constructive value it had in the past of righting wrongs and establishing justice and equality, today it is only a destructive force. It solves no pro-

blems. Rather it creates more problems than it solves. It has committed, as it were, suicide, through the very monstrosity of the weapons that have been made available by science and technology.

However, it is not possible for men and women to live under conditions of cruelty, injustice and tyranny for long, without devising means to remove them. To allow these to remain unremedied, because they cannot be solved without violence and war, will be an advice of despair which, however, temporarily acquiesced in, can never be a permanent solution. Throughout the centuries the best spirit of the age have worked for freedom, justice and equality. It is impossible that humanity, without abrogating its claim to be human, can give up the struggle or the effort to create a more just and a more worthy world to live in. As a matter of fact, the moral and spiritual justification for the existence of human beings on earth would disappear if they did not work for noble ends. If then the old methods of hate, violence and war serve higher purposes no more, is it not incumbent upon the intelligent, thoughtful and morally sensitive people everywhere to find some new method which will solve our problems and cure our ills without killing the patient in the process? I should like to suggest that there is such a new method which humanity can try without annihilating itself through nuclear weapons—the method of diminishing national and international tensions and avoiding strife and violence, which was tried in India with some success under the leadership of Gandhi, whom we in affection and reverence call the Father of our nation.

We can study the new method only in its historical setting. The distinguishing mark of modern times is the idea of 'progress'. It was most marked in the nineteenth century and before World War I. It covered every field of human thought and activity. There was great advance in knowledge, science and technology. Distances were annihilated. The human voice could travel round the world in a few seconds. Any calamity in any part of the world evoked almost univeral sympathy. Health, comfort and happiness were on the increase. The rule of kings, princes and aristocrats was giving place to democracy. In the

economic field there was greater production, freer movements of goods and a more equitable distribution of wealth. The rights of workers in the field and the factory were progressively recognized. In the international field there was greater cooperation, specially in the field of knowledge. Efforts were made to settle at least some international disputes through international conferences and courts. Even the horrors of war were sought to be mitigated through the service of the International Red Cross. In short, there was all-round progress. True, this progress was confined to a few countries and to the upper classes in the West; but, progressively, with the advance of democracy and the ideas of freedom, equality and social justice, these benefits were spreading to other classes and countries. There were freedom movements in many colonial lands. In fact, the world was becoming one. The advance was so great and rapid that it seemed as though the dreams of poets, philosophers and reformers, of continuous progress in perpetual peace, were soon to be fulfilled.

How is it then that today these optimistic hopes of a brighter future have almost disappeared and everywhere there is apprehension and fear for the future? This is chiefly due to the unprecedented cruelty, inhumanity and immorality of the last two World Wars. Even when there is no war, its tensions and threats continue, resulting in the stockpiling of weapons of a kind which if used are sure to destroy the world. The hard-headed politicians who are engaged in this deadly game admit this fact. But the tragedy is that with all that knowledge they assiduously go on piling these destructive weapons and inventing new ones more destructive and demoniac! All this has resulted in cynicism, which is more destructive of moral values than outright disbelief.

Why is this so? Because, as Gandhi believes, we have divided human life into watertight compartments, religious, moral, social, economic, political, individual and collective. For these different departments we have devised different sets of moral values. Often these values conflict with one another. However, life refuses to be compartmentalized. The evil men do in one field of human activity has its effect on the whole of our lives. For the present, however, we shall confine our attention to

the political and specially the international field. In social life, we honour the man who is truthful, non-interfering, modest and affectionate. We honour greatly the man who at personal inconvenience serves his neighbours. In the political and more specially in the international field, we expect the nation and its agents to be selfish, proud, overbearing, cruel and aggressive. As a matter of fact, a nation sacrificing its real or fancied interest for that of its neighbours will not only be considered foolish but even morally depraved. In this field truth, justice, fairplay, fellow-feeling are at a discount, While in social life we denounce hate and violence, the successful use of these in the international field is not only condoned but upheld. While an individual murderer pays with his life for his crime, a politician or an army general, responsible for arson, loot and mass murder, gets the honours of the patriot and of the hero. War unleashes the lowest and the basest of human passions; but it does this under guise of bravery, self-sacrifice, patriotism, and even altruism. The individual citizen is thus unsuspectingly betrayed into anti-social and murderous conduct, of which he would be ashamed in his individual and social life.

If then we are to be saved from this cruel contradiction of moral man living in an immoral or at best an amoral political and international world, we must find a unifying principle in life which will save us from this moral dichotomy. This unifying principles, Gandhi holds, is supplied by morality. The moral principles which guide the conduct of individuals in the social field must also guide their conduct in the political and the international fields. There cannot be two consciences, one in civil and another in political life. One cannot be Dr Jekyl in one aspect of one's life and Mr Hyde in another. Gandhi says: 'The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide life, social, economic, political and purely religious, into watertight compartments. I do not know of any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis for all other activities, which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing.' Any activity which fails to conform to the moral law would not only

defeat its own real purpose but harm humanity. Gandhi says: 'Some friends have told me that truth and nonviolence have no place in politics and wordly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for these as a means of individual salvation. . . .' Again, he says: 'That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values'. As a matter of fact, there is no such thing as an individual in isolation. Gandhi conceives of man as a social individual. His individuality comes out best when he works for social ends. Gandhi says: 'I am endeavouring to see God through the service of humanity; for I know that God is neither in heaven nor down below but in every heart'.

The basic moral principles as Gandhi conceives them are truth, nonviolence and a scrupulous regard for the means to bring about desirable ends. The first two translated in political terms would mean disarmament and open diplomacy. If there is disarmament, countries cannot wage international wars through fisticuffs. And what is 'open diplomacy' or even 'international supervision' but truth in the international field! But perhaps when politicians talk of disarmament and open diplomacy, they do not mean what they say! However, when Gandhi talked of truth and nonviolence in the political and international fields, he meant what he said and acted up to it, whatever the consequences to himself and those working with him. Perhaps, therefore, he has been considered by practical politicians as an indealist!

A few words about truth will not be out of place here. It is often asked by the learned: 'What is truth?' Those who ask this question feel that there can be no answer. They say that truth is relative. Gandhi admits that human truth is relative. Absolute truth for him is perfection which is God, and may not be realizable in the flesh. However, he also feels that it is through relative truth that absolute truth can be approached. The idea of absolute truth is also the regulator and corrector of relative human truth. Relative truth is always being discovered by humanity, otherwise there will be no judges to adjudicate cases! Khrushchev found the truth about spying, when the American U-2 jet plane was downed in Russia. In outraged righteousness he cried out in Paris: 'As God is my witness, my

hands are clean and my soul is pure!' The U.S. authorities when their espionage was discovered justified their action on grounds of *real-politik*, at which two could play. The fact is that when one is injured or considers himself to be injured, one readily finds what is justice, fairplay and truth.

Gandhi holds that truth can be realized only through nonviolence, specially when he who holds to it is prepared to suffer for it without inflicting injury on those who differ from him. The following conversation which took place between Gandhi and the Chairman, Lord Hunter, of the Official Committe which was appointed to inquire into the massacres at Jallianvalabagh in the 'twenties will further clear this point:

Lord Hunter: 'I take it, Mr Gandhi, that you are the author of the satyagraha (civil disobedience) movement.'

Gandhi: 'Yes.'

H: 'Will you explain it briefly?'

G: 'It is a movement intended to replace methods of violence and is entirely based upon truth and nonviolence.'

H: 'Your satyagraha . . . involves the pursuit of truth and in that pursuit you invite suffering and not cause violence to anbyody else.'

G: 'Yes, Sir.'

H: 'However honestly a man may strive for truth, his conception of truth may be different from the notion of truth of others. Who then is to determine the truth?'

G: 'The individual himself will determine that.'

H: '. . . would not that lead to confusion?'

G: 'I do not think so.'

H: 'Honestly striving at truth differs in every case!'

G: 'Therefore, the nonviolence part was the necessary corollary.'

Gandhi considers that truth in this world cannot be discovered except through nonviolence. Violence will only mean that truth is with him who has the big stick or gun or bomb or sputnik! That will not be proof of truth and right but of power and might.

I need not elaborate the second principle of nonviolence. It

means non-injury and absence of any deliberate attempt at coercion.

The third principle, purity of means, flows from the first two. But, unfortunately, it has not always done so in history. Often votaries of truth and even nonviolence have used untruth and violence in the service of a cause which they have considered to be supreme. To take only one example, in the Middle Ages the Catholic Church through the Inquisition destroyed the bodies of men to save their souls! This in the eyes of the Church, professedly devoted to truth and nonviolence, was such a supremely desirable end that even these virtues could be sacrificed in its pursuit! Fanatics of all faiths, religious, national, racial, economic or political, have through the ages tried to accomplish ends thcy have considered desirable through arson, murder, hate, violence and war. This has not diminished conflict. It has rather increased it and made it more violent and destructive. Today it has brought the world to the verge of destruction. The question then is: Can conflicts, specially group and international conflicts and those due to injustice and tyranny, be eliminated by means which will leave behind no bad karma (results) of the use of hate and violence? It must be realized that not only bad ends have their evil consequences, but bad means too. As a matter of fact, means are only ends in the process of accomplishment. Ends are the end-results of the means employed. If the means are bad or evil they will ultimately affect the end in view. It cannot be what one had worked for. If the desired end of all violent conflict and war is ultimate peace, concord and goodwill, it cannot be brought about by means that are diametrically opposed to these. If an individual's aim is to live at peace with his neighbour, the remedy cannot be that he should begin by hating him, destroying his property, burnning his house, dishonouring his womenfolk and killing the members of his family! Can Satan be exorcised by Satan. By these means one can only coerce one's neighbour into submission. The ill-will and the hartred will remain. The aggrieved party will only wait for an opportunity to hit back. This means that whatever is achieved through war and violence is an armed truce, a cold war, an

interlude between two deadly wars.

How are injustice and tyranny to be resisted nonviolently? Gandhi considers that these are perpetrated through the active or passive, conscious or unconscious cooperation and support that the tyrant gets from those over whom he tyrannises. Obedience to the tyrant is rendered out of fear or self-interest. If this cooperation is withdrawn, tyranny cannot function. Satyagraha, therefore, chiefly takes the form of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Non-cooperation, strike or downing of tools have been used in the industrial field wlth conspicuous success. They have vastly improved the conditions of labour. They have even made possible the participation of labour in industry. But what labour does in anger and even in hate, the satyagrahi does nonviolently, in pursuit of what is just and fair. Satyagraha has, therefore, an element of converting the opponent and not coercing him.

Gandhi also rightly feels that only the nonviolent votary of truth can be fearless. The violent resister can be brave but he cannot be fearless. The satyagrahi has nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of. He works in the open and is willing to bear the consequences of his actions. He is, therefore, fearless.

Gandhi also poses the question: 'Who has the right to resist evil?' The question was once asked of Christ when a woman caught in sin was brought before him. He said: 'Let him who has not sinned with woman cast the first stone', and the crowd melted away. In this cynical age everybody would be anxious to throw the first stone, to prove that he at least had never 'sinned with woman'. In history it has often happened that those who have fought against injustice and tyranny have rarely thought of doing justice to those who have been suffering at their hands. In the U.S.A., for instance, when the Founding Fathers in their Declaration of Independence wrote that all men are free and equal, they were not thinking in terms of the freedom and equality of the Negroes or of the exploited classes of the white. When they talked about the pursuit of 'life, liberty and happiness', they were not thinking of these blessings for the Negro! Gandhi, however, holds that the right to fight against injustice

and inequality accrues only to those who have tried to eliminate these from their lives and society. He, therefore, alongside of the civil disobedience movement against the British, devised ways and means to reform Indian society and to free it from the cruelty and injustice practised by one section of the Indian people on another. For this he kept before his countrymen what he called the 'constructive program'. It was meant to remove internal conflicts due to religion, caste, untouchability, sex, wealth, etc. It was also meant to remove the colossal unemployment and poverty of the Indian masses. This was sought to be accomplished through the encouragement and use of Indian-made articles in preference to foreign goods, and principally by patronizing the goods made through decentralized industry, affording the widest employment to the millions of the unemployed poor. It was a program of national awareness, education and service. Gandhi, therefore, called his entire nonviolent movement for independence one of 'national purification'.

Gandhi's philosophy of life for the individual as well as for groups and nations in all their activities was, as we have said, based upon the idea of the supremacy of moral law. This means that we have to follow the moral law whatever the consequences to us and ours. Following the dictates of the moral laws, one cannot injure others. This law can only be fulfilled through voluntary and unyielding self-suffering. Satyagraha, therefore, implies readiness to suffer for a cause one holds to be just and right. The testimony of history is eloquent on this point. No advance in any field of human activity, spiritual, moral, artistic, intellectual, or scientific has ever taken place without the unyielding suffering and even martyrdom of man. Gandhi's death at the hands of an assassin added to the number of distinguished martyrs for noble causes. But is martyrdom the end? Is it not the beginning of a new life, better and nobler?

Gandhi tried his experiment in satyagraha to achieve the independence of India from foreign imperial yoke, a field in which it had never been tried before. He had in this conspicuous success. In no struggle for independence was there less hatred and bloodshed. The two countries, India and England, parted

as friends. As Gandhi worked for national independence, his scope of activity in the international field was limited. But he held that satyagraha can equally work in the entire field of international politics. If it is to, its scope must be amplified and extended. However, whatever extension is made of satyagraha, it will have to be made in his spirit of nonviolence and truth and readiness to suffer for a cause. Gandhi says: 'We have to make truth and nonviolence matters not merely of individual practice, but for practice by groups, communities and nations'. This can only be done if the mind of man is convinced and his heart converted to accept the new values. Once this is done, it will not be difficult to devise external organization and machinery for settling international problems peacefully. But so long as the need for regulating international conduct through moral principles is not recognized by organized groups and nations and by individuals working in their name, any mere mechanical and organizational device for ensuring world peace is likely to fail, as did the League of Nations.

Today the world has not to wait for the conversion of the majority of mankind to accept the new idea of the need of moral conduct in group relations. Political power in recent times has come to be concentrated in a few militarily powerful countries. In these countries, too, it is concentrated in the hands of a new individuals and groups. It is they who, even in democracies, have plunged nations in war without the consent of the people. If the leaders wish it, they can avoid war and seek peaceful methods to settle international disputes. In this I have no doubt the overwhelming majority of the people will support them. But this they can do only if they are intellectually and morally convinced that peaceful methods are the only ones that can be employed with safety today. When they are so convinced, it will not be difficult to organize a world authority to adjudicate between contending parties. To that extent, the big powers will have to modify their ideas of absolute sovereignty. As for the smaller nations and those who are militarily weak, whatever external sovereignty they enjoy is due to some kind of balance of power among the big nations.

Last year the highest dignitaries of these powers met in Paris for world disarmament. The eyes of the whole of humanity were hopefully and expectantly looking forward to their coming to an agreement which would guarantee the peace of the world and save it from the thread of annihilation. But the fond hopes of the world were, for time being at least, dashed to the ground because the conference broke up even before it formally met to discuss the issues for which it had been called. The tragedy is that it dispersed on an issue in which all the powers have been and are equally guilty. As a consequence, the world today is plunged in a deeper gloom of fear and despair. It is not that those who met did not realize their grave responsibility to history and humanity, but their hands were not clean nor their hearts pure. They believed in the old conventional morality that deceit, chicanery and fraud are legitimate weapons to be used in international affairs. As long as the new view that the same moral laws that guide individuals in their dealings with each other should also guide groups and nations in their mutual intercourse is not recognized, the mistakes committed by both sides before, in and after Paris will continue to frustrate all efforts at world peace. Only when the mind and the heart are converted to the new point of view will international conferences and authority succeed. It has always been so in history. External authority has succeeded to the extent that the minds and hearts of men have been converted. In this the universities and the learned can greatly help. Today there can be no worthier object to strive for.

An Approach to the Study of Gandhi

T. K. MAHADEVAN

In a very large sense, the rather rapid decline in the academic acceptance of Gandhi, especially in India, is due to an error in interpretation. This error arises, in my view, primarily from the unscholarly dependence of Indian intellectuals on Gandhi anthologies—a species of popular books which retail the epigrammatic utterances of Gandhi without recourse to historical methods. Books and articles have been, and are being, written on Gandhi without any attempt to consult the sources from which the anthologies have ostensibly been compiled. The situation is made infinitely worse when one anthology draws on another anthology, often shortening and distorting the original text still further, so that what we have is something like an oral tradition on Gandhi. Most of our present knowledge of Gandhi is based almost entirely on this 'oral tradition', screened from the unsuspecting reader's eyes by means of the scholarly subterfuge of footnotes which make a pretence of having consulted the original texts.

Gandhi was not a man who embodied his ideas in a systematic treatise. Apart from his two well-known narrative-didactic works—the autobiography and *Satyagraha in South Africa*—the only other considerable work which attempts to set forth his ideas in anything approaching a systematic manner is *Hind Svaraj*. All the rest of his truly voluminous writings are to be found scattered in his journalistic articles, his letters and memoranda, and such of his speeches as have been recorded faithfully or of which the texts are available—now being painstakingly brought together in the roughly sixty-volume publication project, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. In the nature of things, therefore, no understanding of Gandhi would be complete unless it took all this material into account. On the face of it, this

would seem an impossible academic task, more so as the *Collected Works* is far from complete yet. And in a sense it would even be true to say that the systematic study of Gandhi is only just beginning. Nevertheless, since a good deal of Gandhi's journalistic writings has always been accessible—to those who cared to take the pains—the rather widespread tendency among Indian scholars to take to the anthological short cut is, of course, wholly inexcusable. For apart from the unhistorical jumble that the anthologies mostly dish out, by isolating Gandhi's utterances from their contextual setting they introduce an element of distortion which has done irreparable damage to the understanding of Gandhi.

Gandhi often confessed that he grew 'from truth to truth'; in other words, his earlier utterances need to be understood in the light of his later ones, not vice versa. Not having had the time or the training for the systematic development of his thought, Gandhi's ideas are in the main of an existential kind: they grew as he grew up. The anthologies do little to help understand this development or to trace the progressive nuances of his thinking. Indeed, the popular notion that gandhian thought is holistic, rather than heuristic, is one of the tragic gifts of the (I hope) passing anthological era in the study of Gandhi.

A second major fallacy in the study of Gandhi is the belief, shared by pundit and peasant alike, that he had propounded a separate and distinct body of doctrine in the social, political and economic fields. It is thus that we reduce him to the level of a social reformer. It is thus that we fragment his teaching and miss the wood for the trees. We may talk of a social, political or economic philosophy of Gandhi and produce a surfeit of quotations, especially from the Gandhi anthologies, to prove our case. But I daresay it would be more apposite to speak of the philosophy of Gandhi—in the more generalised sense—and to show how his social, political and economic ideas are derived from, and are accidental to, the core of his teaching.

The core of the gandhian teaching consists of one concept—and no other. It is truth. The whole structure of gandhian thinking can be picturized in terms of an ancient Indian symbol—

the urdhvamulam avakshakham vriksham first mentioned in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* and recurring in at least three Upanishads, the *Katha Svetashvatara* and *Maitri*. The *Katha Upanishad* elaborates it as the eternal ashvattha, an idea which the *Bhagavadgita* later took over and popularized. The root at the top is truth and the branches that proliferate below are the social, political and economic ideas that Gandhi put out in such profusion during his nearly fifty years of public life. Gandhi's mind roamed far and wide, but the meanest of his ideas can be traced back to the fount of truth. The development of gandhian ideas is achieved deductively. He begins with truth and everything else follows as a matter of course.

Chief among the ideas that Gandhi derives deductively from truth is nonviolence—a much abused word. For impenetrable reasons, ever since the passing of Gandhi and often during his lifetime as well, the concept of nonviolence has come to play a much more important part in the interpretation of his teaching than the conccpt of truth. This in my view is nothing short of tragic and it is this misemphasis which has led to the present erosion of Gandhi in the world marketplace of ideas. To add insult to injury, having distorted the seminal quality of Gandhi's emphasis on truth, we then go on to question the rationality of his thinking and to dismiss him as irrelevant and utopian. We vivisect his ideas, dividing them into conventional categories, and pronounce their irrelevance to our time and, indeed, to the human condition in general.

Bereft of truth, untethered to truth, the gandhian teaching is indeed a jumble of unrelated ideas, falling apart like a necklace of pearls of which the thread has snapped, The sutra of truth is the thing. It is truth that holds the gandhian teaching together and gives meaning and significance to the meanest of his ideas. And yet, for a quarter of a century and more, the interpreters of Gandhi—God save us from their kind—have carefully spirited away truth from his teaching and put in its place a thing called 'nonviolence'. When Gandhi spoke of nonviolence, he spoke of it in tandem with truth and not as a separate entity. In fact, Gandhi spoke of truth-and-nonviolence, a two-

legged concept. Our tragedy lies in trying to stand it on one leg and inviting the kind of disaster that betook Humpty Dumpty.

At the cultist level, the recession of Gandhi owes much to our inability to identify and isolate the ephemerae in his teaching, to sift the grain from the chaff. Probably the 'inability' was deliberate and arose from the misguided notion that the masses would understand only a Gandhi wrapped in tinfoil. But the result has been truly disastrous and as the inexorable march of time has exposed the ephemerality of much of the marginal Gandhi, along with it has gone a progressive depreciation of the essential Gandhi as well. In our attempt to popularize Gandhi and to make him comprehensible to the masses, all that we have done is to undermine the inner coherence and soundness of his central teaching of truth.

Partly the inability to distinguish between the timeless and the time-bound aspects of the gandhian teaching arises from a common misconception about what constitutes the samagra-darsana of Gandhi. Taking Gandhi whole has its true and false aspects. We do not have to accept every fad and foible of the man in order to buttres up our adherence to his total philosophy. Indeed the totality of the gandhian philosophy rests not on the details but on a certain sureness and infallibility of approach. This infallibility comes from the primacy of truth in the gandhian scheme of things. The peripheral details may change as often as they please, provided that the core remains untouched—the core of truth.

But what is truth? Or rather, what is the gandhian idea of truth? At first sight this may sound like a question of despair. But it is the submission of this brief essay[1] that the gandhian truth is essentially the existential truth of everyday life. It is the truth of a given situation, fully within the confines of space and time. It is the truth which, in its given context, is indubitable and self-evident and, therefore, absolute. The relativity of such truth, about which we make so much play, comes from a con-

1. This essay is an elaboration of the introductory lecture given by the author at the Seminar on 'Gandhi: Theory and Practice', Indian Institute of Advance Study, Simla, 13-26 October, 1968.

textual change. Within a given context, the existential truth of Gandhi is always absolute, admitting of no kind of compromise or adjustment. The perception, communication and asseveration of such truth constitute the peculiar dynamics of gandhian social action—what has been neatly, though not adequately, summed up in the word satyagraha. The fact that most of us after Gandhi look upon satyagraha as a technique, a way of getting things done, rather than as what it really is, namely, the simple and unadorned practice of truth, shows how far we are from an understanding of his teaching. By the same token do we talk of the power of nonviolence, as though there is such a power bereft of truth, The only power that Gandhi wielded, or cared to wield, and which was the source of all his charisma, was the power of truth. Shorn of truth, nonviolence is a thing of shreds and patches.

In the gandhian teaching, truth is not only self-evident in a given situation, but it is also self-sufficient; whereas nonviolence is both derivative and accidental. Quoting Gandhi is always a tricky business, since most often the quotations are picked up at random from anthologies; but having made so many assertions in the name of Gandhi, I feel I am bound to put before the reader a sampling of his texts[2] all my own—In doing so, I shall try and avoid the beaten track of the anthologies.

'A satyagrahi will adhere to truth to the last. We may even lose the good opinion of others. We may let everything go. But we must not allow truth to forsake us. This and this alone is fearlessness.' (From a miscellaneous writing, 16 May 1908.)

'How can anyone command the power of truth unless he dedicates himself to truth?' (From the preface to *Hind Svaraj*, 22 November 1909.)

'When the rats began to die in Rajkot, I advised all to leave the house or the town. Those were my ideas then. I now feel that it was a mistake on my part. Many of my ideas have undergone a similar change. Every time the objective was the same—

2. These quotations are from the relevent volumes of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.*

the search for truth.' (From a letter to Narandas Gandhi, 8 February 1911.)

'Satyagraha is not a difficult term to understand. It only means adherence to truth. Whatever else the ethical life may mean, it cannot be ethical if it is not based on truth.' (From an article, 28 October 1911.)

'He is a satyagrahi who has resolved to practise nothing but truth, and such a one will know the right way every time.' (Fragment of a letter, 9 June 1914.)

'Instead of telling you what I expect of each one of you individually, let me tell you what I expect from you all. It is that you should observe to perfection our first and last vow, the vow of truth.' (Reply to birthday greetings in the Ashram, 1 October 1918.)

'There can be no room for untruth in my writings, because it is my unshakable belief that there is no religion other than truth and because I am capable of rejecting aught obtained at the cost of truth.' (Letter to F.G. Pratt. 16 April 1919.)

'Truth is the same thing as moksha. Anyone who does not display agraha for moksha is no man; he is only a brute.' (Letter to Mahadev Desai, 15 September 1969.)

'All have wished me long life. My desire is to close this life searching for truth, acting truth and thinking truth—and that alone.' (Letter of thanks on receiving birthday greetings, 28 September 1919.)

'The highest honesty must be introduced in the political life of the country if we are to make our mark as a nation. This presupposes at the present moment a very firm and definite acceptance of the creed of truth at any cost.' (Letter to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, 18 March 1920.)

'I believe that it is possible to introduce uncompromising truth and honesty in the political life of the country. Whilst I would not expect the League to follow me in my civil disobedience methods, I would strain every nerve to make truth and nonviolenee accepted in all our national activities.' (From a communication to members of the All-India Home Rule League, 28 April 1920.)

'I have no party save that of truth. I want to live for nothing but truth. Whether you remain in the non-cooperation ranks, or whether you do not, I cannot desert you, even as I cannot desert Malaviyaji, no matter where I find him for the time being. For I consider you to be a man of truth. You have left in me the impression that you are too cultured to do anything wrong, knowing it to be such.' (From a letter to M.R. Jayakar, 15 January 1922.)

'As I proceed in my quest for truth, it grows upon me that truth comprehends everything. I often feel that ahimsa is in truth, not vice versa. Out of truth emerges love and tenderness.' (From a letter to Jamnalal Bajaj, 16 March 1922.)

'My correspondent accuses me of the crime of using the ambiguous middle in that I have confused truth and nonviolence with the Hindu creed. The crime is deliberate. It is the good fortune or the misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed. In order, therefore, to protect myself against any misunderstanding, I have said that truth and nonviolence is my creed. If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: search after truth through nonviolent means. A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth.' (From an article, 24 April 1924.)

'The rishis of old who lived in the forests cut and fetched wood, tended cattle, and even fought. But their pursuit in life was preeminently the search after truth.' (From an article, 17 July 1924.)

'It is one's duty to say only that which, after a painstaking inquiry, one has come to regard as the truth, even if the world considers it to be an error. In no other way can one become fearless. I cannot consider anything dearer to me than moksha. Yet even that moksha I would renounce if it were to conflict with truth and nonviolence.' (From a letter to G.D. Birla, 21 August 1924.)

'The fundamental principles of Hinduism are absolute belief in truth and nonviolence. Therefore use truth as your anvil, nonviolence as your hammer; and anything that does not stand

with ahimsa, reject as non-Hindu.' (From a speech in Madras, 22 March 1925.)

At this point I should like to call a halt to the Gandhi texts and to consider a question that must have arisen in the mind of the reader: How far is this gandhian absorption in truth a reflection of the Indian Hindu tradition? I am posing this question particularly to explode the popular myth that Gandhi belongs in the tradition of Mahavira, Buddha and Jesus—that is to say, in the non-Hindu, Jaina-Buddhist tradition of ahimsa, karuna and love. Like Samkara being called a Buddhist quisling (pracchanna-bauddha) by the Hindu jingoists of his time, Gandhi was often pilloried for being an 'enemy of Hinduism'; and the conspiracy that led to his assassination derived much of its firepower from this arch misconception. Indeed, most of those who claim to follow Gandhi and to interpret his teaching, look for the sources of his inspiration in Tolstoyan Christianity and make much play of his comparative early unfamiliarity with the Hindu inheritance. Within limits, all this is true; but while the Western Christian tradition provided Gandhi with the initial stimulus, it cannot be denied that throughout the rest of his life he drew his daily sustenance from Hindu roots. I would, therefore, venture to say that the forerunners of Gandhi are the great epic heroes of Hindu India—Harishcandra, Rama and Yudhishthira.

One of Gandhi's most formative periods, from the point of view of his intellectual development, was the two-year sentence of imprisonment that he served in Yeravada jail in 1922-24. In an interview soon after this, in February 1924, he said: 'I have plunged into politics simply in search of truth. . . . I want to show how to epitomize the *Mahabharata*.'

For the best part of his prison term, this man of fifty-three almost like a schoolboy set himself a reading task that would be the envy of men half his age. Having been caught most of his years in the vortex of action, which left him little time or inclination for reading and the pursuit of knowledge, it was as though he was trying desperately to make up for the loss. He read long and widely—and sometimes without choice or discri-

mination. The list of what he read, as we find it recorded in his Jail Diary, is truly formidable. Some of the books he merely skipped through and put aside; others he read because they were to be had in the jail library.

But there was one book on the study of which he spent many months. This was the *Mahabharata*. His Jail Diary reveals that he read this great Sanskrit epic in a Gujarati translation, spending in all as many as 163 days on the reading. It is significant that nearly a third of this time he devoted to a study of the Santi-parva, the celebrated post-war book of the epic in which the dying Bhisma discourses at great length on the laws and duties of life.

Like that other great, though smaller, Indian epic, the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, the *Mahabharata* of Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa was written essentially for the vindication of truth or dharma. Gandhi confesses that he began its study hesitantly and with some scepticism. But the dominant refrain of the epic, man's quest for truth, soon gripped him. Tireless as he himself was in the search for truth, Gandhi lost little time in realizing the incisive quality of Vyasa's work and the daring with which it probed the secrets of dharma. Here within the confines of a single work, examined, elaborated and vindicated with great intellectual rigour, were all the nuances of the truth-seeker's dilemmas. No wonder Gandhi spoke of his desire to 'epitomize the *Mahabharata*'.

During his reading of the epic, Gandhi once jotted down in his Diary two parallel columns of indicators which seemed to him to bring out the contrast between truth and untruth. He might have done this in an idle hour, but we can be sure that these strange indicators, some of them naive and childish, were a pointer to the unremitting intensity of his groping towards truth.

Part of the columns runs as follows :

Truth is	*Untruth is*
light	darkness
life	death
goodness	evil

existence	non-existence
love	hatred

At one point he wrote down, 'Truth is a right angle', but was not sure what untruth was!

Was Gandhi, I wonder, trying to expand the thirteen-fold expression of truth given in the *Mahabharata*?

satyam ca samata caiva damascaiva na samsayah
amatsaryam ksama caiva hris titiksanasuyata
tyago dhyanam atharyatvam dhrtisca satatam sthira
ahimsa caiva rajendra satyakaras trayodasa[3]

Bhisma to Yudhisthira: 'O monarch, truth expresses itself in thirteen indubitable forms—as impartiality, restraint, magnanimity, forgiveness, modesty, patience, tolerance, detachment, introspection, dignity, resoluteness, constancy and harmlessness.'

A remarkable combination of virtues—and yet only the bare minimum. Notice the quality that stands at the apex: harmlessness, the nonviolence of Gandhi. Truth is nonviolence. A truthful position never needs to be defended or vindicated by violent means. Indeed, the need for violence which so often taints our lives would seem to indicate that somewhere in us there is an unnoticed flaw, that the truth in our lives is not whole and complete. In other words, when we concede the need for residual violence, all that we are saying is that absolute, unflawed truth is not of this world, not that violence is an irreducible entity. Conversely, when we deny the universality of nonviolence, we can hardly be accused of denigrating it. The *Mahabharata* equation that truth is nonviolence or that nonviolence is an expression of truth—ahimsa satyakarah—is absolute and unchangeable. Where truth is complete there nonviolence is complete; where truth is partial there violence and nonviolence go hand in hand.

What might Gandhi have learnt from the *Mahabharata* that he did not know already from his desultory earlier studies or from the often crucial nature of his own experiences or from his habit of introspection? This is not an easy question to answer.

3. *Mahabharata* (critical edition), 12.156.8, 9.

The greatness of the *Mahabharata* lies in its absence of dogmatism, and it is very likely that its chief influence on Gandhi's mind was to smooth out the hard edges in his thinking.

Bhisma punctuates his long discourse to Yudhisthira with a timely reminder:

naitac chuddhagamad eva tava dharmanusasanam
prajna-samavataro 'yam kavibhih sambhrtam madhu[4]

'All this that I have taught you is not to be understood as coming solely from the scriptures. Rather is it the quintessence of the wisdom and experience of a long line of seers and sages.'

Why do we stand behind Gandhi, cowering in his shadow, when he wanted us to stand on his shoulders and look ahead? Why have we reduced ourselves to mindless automatons mumbling his words or quarrelling over the dry sands of exegesis? Like that wisest of men, Bhisma, Gandhi was a gushing mountain stream of experiment and innovation. He cared little for the old Indian fallacy of sruti-pramana (scriptural authority) which has been such a brake on our intellectual development. No text however ancient or sacred but he would bend it to the dictates of his reason and moral sense.

For after all truth is not a static quantity. The search for truth is an ongoing process. It did not end with the Veda or the Upanisad or the *Bhagavadgita*, nor indeed with Gautama or Jesus or Gandhi. It is like a Joycean sentence, going endlessly on, unpunctuated. We may draw from the past, as Gandhi did, but we dare not stop and look back. If we tarry too long, if we hesitate, we shall be left behind, a mere weed on the river bank, to fester and be forgotten.

Truth! How easy on the tongue! And how glibly some of us use it! And yet, what is truth? Said Bhisma to Yudhisthira: satyanrte viniscitya tato bhavati dharma-vit.[5] Unless you can distingush truth from untruth, you cannot surely understand dharma. But then what is dharma? A golden word, containing within its simple confines all the wisdom and experience of

4. *Ibid.*, 12.140.3.
5. *Ibid.*, 12.110.6b.

centuries of Indian civilization. A simple concept and at the same time one that is not easy to understand or to explain—dharmah sudurvacah duskarah—a word with a load of meaning too involved and encrusted to be taken apart on the run.

But unless we understand dharma we shall know nothing of Gandhi! True, it is not a word he often used; perhaps he hardly ever used it in the fundamental manner in which it is used in Indian ethics. Maybe he deliberately eschewed its use for fear that the secondary and tertiary meanings of dharma, some of them patently unsavoury, would tend to cloud his simple message.

And yet, whether Gandhi did or did not speak of dharma, there is no running away from the fact that the whole of his teaching is shot through with the implications of that golden word. Instead of using a word that may be misunderstood, he expanded it into the famous gandhian tandem—truth and non-violence. For as he undoubtedly argued to himself, even dharma might be disputed, but who would dispute truth?

In risking this innovation, Gandhi was nevertheless not entirely on virgin ground. For though Indian tradition begins by lamenting the indefinability of dharma, it soon comes up with a very acceptable and inclusive definition of that word:

prabhavarthaya bhutanam dharma-pravacanam krtam[6]

'It is to serve the ends of human advancement that the concept of dharma has been enunciated.'

In other words, dharma is not the status quo. Nor is it a set of ground rules to help men pursue an untroubled vegetable existence free from strife and striving. Dharma is rather a free, fluid and flexible modus operandi by which the human race can grow without outgrowing itself. In a specific sense, dharma is the means; and as with all means, it is subservient to the larger ends of human destiny. But in a more inclusive sense, dharma is the end as well. For without it the human race may well grind to a halt or destroy itself. Dharma is thus the great key to human survival.

But survival has not the same meaning for termites and men.

6. *Ibid.*, 12.110.10a.

The human race cannot survive unless it has the freedom to grow. Growth (prabhava) is important for us. If we cease to grow, we shall wilt and wither away. We are just not built for survival at any cost!

In the context of man's present predicament, it would define dharma as that which helps us to progress without perishing—to grow and yet survive. This is the crux of our problem—as well as Gandhi's—how not to set up barbed-wire fences on man's expanding frontiers of knowledge, power and conciousness and yet to hold him back from hurtling over the brink. It is a delicate balancing trick. In a manner of speaking, it is even somewhat like the perilous American game of 'Chicken!'—except that the dharma-accelerator has an in-built braking device which cuts off power at the critical split second.

Gandhi called this braking device 'nonviolence'. So does Vyasa in the *Mahabharata*;

yat syad ahimsa-samyuktam sa dharma iti niscayah[7]

'Whatever precludes injury to others, that indeed is dharma.' Sounds dull and prosaic. Stocks and stones don't injure one another. Quick to notice the flaw, Vyasa elaborates the definition by adding:

yat syad dharana-samyuktam sa dharma iti niscayah[8]

'Whatever helps to uphold, nourish and preserve the race, that indeed is dharma.' He adds an etymological footnote to this by saying: dharanad dharma ityahuh (dharma is so called because it upholds). The survival factor 'dharana' also means restraint—the self-conscious braking device in man.

But restraint is not abnegation. It does not mean you don't put your foot on the accelerator: you do. Life would hardly be worth living if we denied ourselves everything for fear of death and extinction. This is precisely the point Vyasa selects to derive home at the conclusion of his great epic:

urdhva-bahur viraumyesa na ca kascic chrnoti me
dharmad arthasca kamasca sa kimartham na sevyate[9]

7. *Ibid.*, 12.110.10b.
8. *Ibid.*, 12.110.11b.
9. *Ibid.*, 18.5.49.

One of the great moments in all literature. 'With uplifted hands I call out: alas, no one listens to me. By practising dharma one can gain all the wealth and happiness in the world. And yet who cares for dharma?' Indeed we all want the short cut, or what we think is the short cut. But the shortest cut of all is the straight path of dharma. It only seems long and tedious—but that is because it studiously avoids the brink. The apparent slowness of dharma is due to that in-built braking device which cuts off acceleration at the point of explosion. Without it all our quick victories would be Dunkirks.

How then shall we characterize dharma? By its expansive dynamism—what Gandhi called truth—or by its self-inhibiting survival device—what Gandhi called nonviolence? It is a difficult choice. We want the achievements of science but we also want time, and an extra innings, in which to savour those achievements. No one has recounted this dilemma more vividly than Gandhi: 'When I look for ahimsa, truth says, Find it through me. When I look for truth, ahimsa says, Find it through me.'[10]

Here I think is the core of the Gandhi image—of a man endlessly, tirelessly in search of truth. Nandlal Bose, in that famous linocut, immortalized the walking Gandhi, the eternal pilgrim with the staff in hand and the forward gait, moving endlessly on, never looking back. But Gandhi was more than a pilgrim: he was an indefatigable searcher for truth. Though movement was necessary for him, it wasn't enough merely to move onwards in one set direction. For Gandhi the mumuksu, unlike Gandhi the yatrika, was never sure which way his road lay. If he knew, his search for truth would not be a search for truth at all. I am reminded of the poet's predicament:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.[11]

10. *Young India*, 4 June 1925, p. 191.
11. From Robert Frost's 'The Road Not Taken'.

With some pardonable exaggeration, I would say that the Indian mind's search for truth, which we find so intensely portrayed in Gandhi, began several millennia ago in the *Rg Veda*:

na vi janami yadivedamasmi ninyah samnaddho manasa carami[12]

'What thing I truly am, I know not clearly. Mysterious, fettered in my mind, I wander.' It is a search which has a beginning but no end. Gandhi continued the search; others have to take over from where he left it. The *Rg Vedic* poets called it rta and sometimes satya:

rtam ca satyam cabhiddhat tapaso'dhyajayata[13]

'Both rta and satya originated from intense tapas.' I have thought it wiser to leave these loaded terms as they are, untranslated, remembering that even an ancient text like the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* could no more than work out an imaginative, but speculative, etymology for satya (sat+tyat).

At an earlier point in the same Mandala, the poets venture the idea that 'it is truth which bears this earth aloft'—satyenottabhita bhumih[14]—which is indeed saying a great deal. In the Seventh Mandala, they make a clear distinction between truth and falsehood, bringing the idea down from its cosmological heights to the human and ethical level:

suvijnanam cikituse janaya saccasacca vacasi pasprdhate
tayor yat satyam yatarad rjiyas tad it somo, vati hantyasat[15]

'Truth and falsehood run a race against each other. Of them, Soma protects what is true and straightforward, and strikes down what is false.'

In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, the idea receives a further extension to cover the psychological aspects of the human condition:

satyam brahmetyupasita; atha khalu kratumayo 'yam purusah[16]

'Meditate on truth as brahman. After all what is man but

12. *Rg Veda*, 1.164.37a.
13. *Ibid.*, 10.190.1a.
14. *Ibid.*, 10.85.1a.
15. *Ibid.*, 7.104.12.
16. *Satapatha Brahmana*, 10.6.3.1.

will?'

However, it is in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki that the conception of truth receives its maximum definition. The poet achieves his object by means of several deft brush-strokes, all of them exceedingly beautiful, but I shall content myself with a few samples:

trinyeva vyasananyatra kamajani bhavantyuta
mithya-vakyam paramakam . . .[17]
mithya-vakyam na te bhutam na bhavisyati raghava[18]

Says Sita to Rama: 'There are but three evils that arise from human passion. Of these, uttering a falsehood is the first. This primal evil has never overtaken you, Raghava; nor will it ever.'

This opinion of a wife—not an easy certificate at the best of times—finds its justification in that celebrated passage where Rama confides to his brother Bharata:

laksmis candrad apeyad va himavan va himam tyajet
atiyat sagaro velam na pratijnam aham pituh[19]

'It is conceivable that beauty may forsake the moon, or snow may vanish from the Himalaya, or that the ocean may overleap the land. But it is inconceivable that I should ever break the word I gave to my father.'

Later on Rama explains to Jabali the political meaning of truthful behaviour:

satyam evanrsamsam ca rajavrttam sanatanam
tasmat satyatmakam rajyam satye lokah pratisthitah[20]

'The principle of sovereignty, which includes the quality of pity, has through eternity been truth. Therefore it is that sovereignty is truth itself. And thus too is the world founded on truth.'

Towards the close of the epic, Valmiki shows how the ingrained sychophantism in human nature makes it difficult for most men to practise truthful behaviour. In a parting broadside to his brother Ravana, Vibhisana says:

sulabhah purusa rajan satatam priyavadinah

17. *Ramayana, Aranya-kanda.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ramayana, Ayodhya-kanda.*
20. *Ibid.*

apriyasya ca pathyasya vakta srota ca durlabhah[21]

'Men who always speak agreeably are easy to find, your majesty. Rare indeed is the man who will speak the unpleasant truth; and rare too the man who will give ear to it.'

Almost as though taking a cue from Valmiki, Vyasa in his *Mahabharata* carries the analysis of truth to dizzy heights For example, at one point Bhisma says to his interlocutor, Yudhisthira:

nasti satyat paro dharmo nanrtat patakam param
sthitir hi satyam dharmasya tasmat satyam na lopayet[22]

'There is no greater good than truth, and no greater evil than falsehood. Indeed truth is the very foundation of dharma. Therefore it is that one is enjoined not to trangress truth.'

But then Bhisma complicates the issue by introducing certain bewildering niceties which have the superficial effect of justifying chicanery:

satyasya vacanam sadhu na satyad vidyate param
yad bhuloke sudurjnatam tat te vaksyami bharata
bhavet satyam na vaktavyam vaktavyam anrtam bhavet
yatranrtam bhavet satyam satyam vapyanrtan bhavet
tadrse muhyate balo yatra satyam anisthitam
satyanrte viniscitya tato bhavati dharma-vit[23]

'It is good to speak the truth. There is nothing greater than being truthful. However, I shall tell you something, O Bharata, which is not popularly understood. Where a lie masquerades as truth, there it is better not to speak the truth. On the other hand, where truth sounds false it is even better to speak a lie. Truthfulness dissociated from dharma leads to delusion. He alone understands dharma who can discriminate between genuine truth and genuine falsehood.'

After this piece of sophistication, Vyasa introduces through Narada a very necessary clarification:

satyasya vacanam sreyah satya-jnanam tu duskaram

21. *Ramayana, Yuddha-kanda.*
22. *Mahabharata*, 12.156.24.
23. *Ibid.*, 12.110.4-6.

yad bhuta-hitam atyantam etat satyam bravimyaham[24]

'It is indeed noble to speak the truth, but one is never sure what the truth is. I tell you, that alone is truth which is wholly beneficial to others.'

This is where Gandhi's nonviolence comes in. The whole conception is elaborated with great profundity in the famous encounter between Tuladhara the merchant (anticipating Gandhi's Raychandbhai) and Jajali:

adrohenaiva bhutanam alpa-drohena va punah
ya vrttih sa paro dharmas tena jivami jajale[25]

'The highest dharma is to live in such a way that no harm—or very little harm—is done to others. I live that kind of life, Jajali.'

Tuladhara then explains what constitutes the hallmark of this way of life:

yada cayam na vibheti yada casman na vibhyati[26]

'It is the kind of life in which one neither fears others nor is feared by them in turn.'

Almost in the next breath, he clinches the argument with a tour de force:

na bhuto na bhavisyas ca na ca dharmo 'sti kascana
yo 'bhayah sarva-bhutanam sa prapnotyabhayam padam[27]

'Why talk of the past and the future, or even of dharma and adharma? The simple truth is that a person who lives a life bereft of harm to others achieves fearlessness himself.'

Tuladhara then rounds off this remarkable dialogue with a final gandhian plea:

danam bhutabhayasyahuh sarva-danebhya uttamam
bravimi te satyam idam sraddhasva ca jajale[28]

'Take this truth from me, O Jajali. There is no greater gift than the assurance of harmlessness to others.'

Elsewhere in the epic, Bhisma makes it even clearer in the

24. *Ibid.*, 12.276.19.
25. *Ibid.*, 12.254.6.
26. *Ibid.*, 12.254.16.
27. *Ibid.*, 12.254.18.
28. *Ibid.*, 12.254.33.

course of his long discourse to Yudhisthira:

jivitum yah svayam cecchet katham so 'nyam praghatayet
yad yad atmana iccheta tat parasyapi cintayet[29]

'How can anyone who wishes to live himself, want to destroy others? Whatever we want ourselves, we should cherish for others as well.'

Vyasa expresses the same truth in a more downright and dogmatic fashion in the 'Anusasana-parva':

na tat parasya samddhyat pratikulam yad atmanah
esa samksepato dharmah . . .[30]

'Dharma in a nutshell: not to inflict on others what is disagreeable to oneself.'

Popularly known as a hallmark of the Christian ethic—'Behave towards others as you would have them behave towards you'—this idea is in fact deeply etched into Indian Hindu thought and is as old as the Smrtis. For example, the *Daksa Smriti* says:

yathaivatma paras tadvad drastavyah sukham icchata
sukha-duhkhani tulyani yathatmani tatha pare[31]

'If you wish to be happy, look upon others as you would look upon yourself. Joy and sorrow affect all in the same way.'

The *Devala Smrti* is even more explicit:

sruyatam dharma-sarvasvam srutva caivavadharyatam
atmanah pratikulani paresam na samacaret[32]

'The quintessence of dharma: don't do to others what you yourself find disagreeable.'

Reduced to an aphorism—atmavat sarva-bhutani—first suggested in the *Apastamba Smrti*, the idea gained an enlarged definition in one of the later Upanisads, the *Annapurna*:

atmavat sarva-bhutani para-dravyani losthavat
svabhavad eva na bhayad yah pasyati sa pasyati[33]

'He indeed is truly perceptive who, by nature rather than by compulsion, looks upon others as upon himself and covets not

29. *Ibid.*, 12.251.21.
30. *Op. cit.*, 113.8.
31. *Op. cit.*, 3.22.
32. Quoted in P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. I.
33. *Op. cit.*, 1.38.

their wealth.'

I have gone at this length into the record of ancient Indian tradition to show beyond any manner of doubt that the gandhian teaching belongs strictly within this mainstream and any superficial resemblance it may have to Western Christian tradition can only be accidental. To say that the Hindu forebears of Gandhi were concerned more with the spiritual uplift of man rather than with his political and social advancement is only partly true. The *Mahabharata*, at any rate, insists again and again that the reserves of power in truth or dharma are immense and that this power is serviceable in the material realm as well. In fact, this is the larger import of the well-known Upanisadic dictum: satyam eva jayate nanrtam—truth alone wins in the end, not falsehood. The entire Indian epic tradition is devoted to this one theme and no other. A life permeated, interpenetrated with truth gains this world as well as the 'other'.

silena hi trayo lokah sakya jetum na samsayah
na hi kimcid asadhyam vai loke silavatam bhavet[34]

This is, of all people, Dhrtarastra advising Duryodhana: 'One can conquer the whole world by the power of virtue. Nothing is impossible for a virtuous person.' Had Duryodhana heeded this advice, the *Mahabharata* story might well have been different! When Gandhi spoke of wanting to spiritualise politics he was merely rehearsing an ancient Indian dream which found its apotheosis in the concept of Ramarajya—outlined by Valmiki and elaborated, each in his own way, by Tulsidas and Gandhi.

In an India which has begun to profess secularism of a home-brewed variety, my insistence on the inescapable Hindu roots of gandhian thought may sound somewhat discordant. But I am convinced that it is a necessary corrective that we should begin to relate his teaching to these roots and thus restore some of the lost balance and perspective, For Gandhi cannot be understood in terms of Marx or Hobbes as well as he can be understood in terms of the *Mahabharata* or Hariscandra. If I may put this in

34. *Mahabharata*, 12.124.15.

the form of an equation:

Gandhi—God=0.

Unless we take into account Gandhi's open and avowed absorption in God—which to him was the same thing as truth—all our attempts to understand and interpret him will lead to nothing. One of our fashionable preoccupations nowadays is to make Gandhi 'relevant' to the presentday world and we go to endless pains to show the validity of each one of the dozen or so political, economic and social ideas that he adumbrated in his *Hind Svaraj*—a tract that he wrote almost at the beginning of this century and which he continued to champion to the end of his days. But while Gandhi produced something like an integrated and coherent, even holistic, world-view, what we in our misplaced enthusiasm do with his teaching is another matter. We cut him up and fragment him, in the process forgetting the thread that binds his ideas together, and far from succeeding in 'relevanting' him we merely show up Gandhi in the worst possible light.

A rational and objective study of Gandhi—what I have argued has yet to begin—must take at least two factors into account. First, like all great men Gandhi has his fair share of what I would call 'great failings'. One of the most disastrous of these was his procrustean tendency to force reality into a preconceived mould and to reach conclusions that were prima facie questionable. Given the premisses with which be started, these conclusions were doubtless unimpeachable, but then no human premisses are ever absolute. This leads us to the second factor—the irrevocable finiteness of all human concepts and instruments. There can be no finality even about Gandhi.

To summarize: the palpable failure in the study of Gandhi so far may be ascribed to the following reasons, among others. First, the dependence of scholars on Gandhi anthologies and the general inaccessibility of Gandhi's original writings in their entirety. Secondly, the nature of the gandhian corpus, which though voluminous in extent consists almost entirely of journalistic writings spread over a long period of years, from which to abstract anything like a doctrinal core is a task in itself. Thirdly,

the fallacious scholarly assumption which continues to see in Gandhi a political, social and economic thinker and to derive from his teaching political, social and economic 'systems'. Fourthly, the misconception that the core of the gandhian teaching relates to nonviolence and not to truth and a consequent misemphasis and distortion of what it was that Gandhi was trying to tell us, both by precept and example. Fifthly, the ignorant misplacing of Gandhi amidst a western Christian tradition rather than where he truly and fundamentally belongs —within the mainstream of India's ethical and philosophical tradition.

Although the gandhian teaching is essentially universal in character, we in India at any rate cannot—and dare not—forget that Gandhi lived and died in the service of our motherland. Our primary duty, whether as followers of Gandhi or as students of his thought, is thus to serve India—not the India of a romantic past or the India of Gandhi's time but the India of today. In doing so, we shall fail in our duty if we twisted the palpable and objective requirements of our country to suit some received dogma—whether gandhian (or Marxist or American) or any other. We are living in a fast moving world in which ideas are being constantly eroded, replenished and replaced. To live up to the truth of this very fluid human situation, to prevent an ossification of our thought, and to help in the correct perception, communication and upholding of the truth in us—this is the core of the gandhian teaching which is valid for all time and is never in need of the specious scholarly desire for 'relevanting'.

Gandhi and Marx: Some Basic Differences

S. B. MOOKHERJI

> One thing is certain : Gandhi's spirit will triumph, or it will manifest itself again, as were manifested, centuries before, the Messiah and the Buddha, till there finally is manifested, in a moral half-god, the perfect manifestation of the principle of life which will lead a new humanity on to a new path.
>
> —ROMAIN ROLLAND.

Vinoba Bhave writes in his introduction to the late K.G. Mashruwala's brochure on a comparative study of Gandhian and Marxist philosophies that Gandhi (1869-1948) and Karl Marx (1818-1880) are among the greatest lovers of humanity. The hearts of both bled for 'submerged' humanity, humanity ground to dust under the heels of the purse-proud, power-puffed high and mighty. Both dreamt of a new socio-political order in which the common man and woman will enjoy full human rights without let or hindrance, and oppression and exploitation will be memories of the past. Each prescribes a method by which his ideal is to be made a reality. Each is a path-finder for humanity groping in darkness. Each shows a path for the realization of the ideal of human equality and human brotherhood.

The similarity, however, ends here. Gandhi stands for sarvodaya, the greatest good of all. His ideal state is Ramarajya in which exploitation of man by man will be unknown. The consummation is to be reached by a change of heart, by inner purification, by an assiduous cultivation of moral virtues and by constructive work. Karl Marx, on the other hand, dreamt of a classless society, a society in which every man and woman would

have his or her due. All artificial barriers between man and man will cease to exist. The privileged classes will not voluntarily surrender their power and privileges. Hence the necessity of the class-war—a fight to the finish between the plutocrats and the proletariat, between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'—which will result in the liquidation of the propertied classes, the victorious proletariat will capture the state machinery and set up a dictatorship of the proletariat, which will disappear in the fullness of time and with it the state also will wither away. Marx, it should be noted, regards the state as an apparatus of coercion, a source of unmitigated evil. Gandhi, like the gentle Buddha, tried to persuade.[1] Marx, on the other hand, would coerce. The one aims at a 'revolution by agreement', the other, a blood-bath, which must first destroy all accepted values and norms and then build literally on the ruins of the old. Gandhi is an apostle of love and peace, Marx an exponent of class hatred and class-war.

Many, however, have discovered so great a similarity between the Gandhian and the Marxist ideas and ideologies that to them Marxism is sarvodaya minus God. To put it in another way, they would have us believe that sarvodaya is Marxism plus God. This is over-simplification *par excellence*. An attempt will be made in the following pages to bring out some of the basic differences between the Gandhian and the Marxist thought.

Marx takes his stand on the economic or materialistic interpretation of history, according to which 'all the important things in history are rooted in an economic process. . . . In short, history is a science for search of food.'[2] We are told that change of climate, discovery of new materials and invention of new technical processes constitute the sole driving force in human evolution, that they alone determine the course of history, that the thoughts and wills of men have nothing to do with human evolution. 'Thus even the activity of inventing and creating is

1. Cf. 'My method is conversion, not coercion; it is self-suffering, not the suffering of the tyrant . . .', *Mahatma*, Vol. II, by D.G. Tendulkar, p. 429 (quoted).
2. *A Miscellany of Men* by G.K. Chesterton, p. 63.

not, as it appears to be, a spontaneous mental activity, but is a function or by-product of environmental circumstances.'[3]

Gandhi, however, rejected the materialistic or economic interpretation of history. He did not hold economic factors to be responsible for all the evils of the world. Nor did he believe that all wars originate in economic causes. He could never bring himself to believe that the history of man is only economic history. He believed in the power of the spirit of man to shape its environment to some extent and thus affect the course of history. It may be pointed out in this connection that 'Man would have no history if he were only economic. . . . There would be no history if there were only economic history. All the historical events have been due to twists and turns given to the economic instinct by forces that were not economic.'[4] Radhakrishnan too speaks in a similar vein: 'The emphasis on the importance of economic conditions is correct; the suggestion that they are exclusively determinant of history is incorrect'.[5]

A firm belief in the spirit—the spirit as distinct from and superior to matter—is the very sheet-anchor of Gandhian philosophy. Marxism, on the other hand, even when it does not totally reject the spirit, believes matter to be the ultimate reality and spirit only a by-product of matter. Matter, Marx holds, is superior to the spirit. That is why he emphasises a change of material conditions as the essential pre-condition of all real and lasting changes. The changed material conditions, he asserts, will react on the spirit and permanently change the nature of man. Marxism thus 'works from the outside and works to the inner'. Matter is the ultimate reality for Marx and the Marxists. To quote Lenin, 'Materialism, in full agreement with natural science, takes matter as the prius, regarding consciousness, reasoning and sensation as a derivative, because in a well-expressed form it is connected only with the higher forms of matter'.[6] Marxists declare: Change the material conditions; the

3. *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics* by C.E.M. Joad, p. 667.
4. G.K. Chesterton, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
5. *Gandhi's View of Life* by C. Shukla, p. 102 (quoted).
6. *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism.*

spirit will take care of itself.

Gandhi does not agree. He does not accept 'the view which denies the existence of any entity transcending the physical world'. Its existence, he admits, 'cannot be proved through the evidence of the senses'. 'It is', he declares, 'self-evident. It can be realized only through the inner experience of man. . . In my view the trend of human nature is essentially upward.'[7] The ideal of Ramarajya spoken of by Gandhi is to be made a reality by purifying the heart of man. The spirit will wake up in a purified heart and will transform the owner of the heart. The awakened spirit, like the philosopher's stone, makes gold of base metals. Gandhi thus starts from the soul within and works his way out to the environment. 'Mechanical makeshifts and external structure by themselves cannot achieve spiritual results. Changes in the social architecture do not alter the minds of peoples. . . . Institutions are of little avail unless we are trained to obey our conscience and develop brotherly love. Unless the leaders of the world discover their human dignity in themselves, not in the freedom of their conscience, there is no hope for the ordered peace of a world community.'[8] The failure of democracy in not a few of the new states of Asia and Africa shows how useless mechanical devices alone are.[9] Gandhi, therefore, sought to bring about a genuine inner change and prescribed truth, nonviolence, self-denial, the service of 'Daridranarayana' (God in the poor man's garb) and constructive work as the means of inner change and consequent transformation of the human personality. Any attempt to change the material conditions without inner change will make the confusion worse confounded.

History shows that ideas are more important factors in human affairs than anything else. Real power does not lie in nuclear weapons, military alliances like the NATO and SEATO, industrial production, raw materials, communications and geography. People and ideas are the real determinants in human affairs.

7. C. Sukla *op. cit.*, p. 85 (quoted).
8. *Great Indians* by S. Radhakrishnan, pp. 47-48.
9. Vide *Afro-Asian States and their Problems* by K.M. Panikkar, pp. 14-30.

They constitute the basic forces 'which have shaped Asian history in the post-war years, which are today emerging in Africa, and which the Communists are convinced will increasingly write world history from now on.'[10] Since 1947, more than 1.5 billion people—more than one-half of mankind—have generated sufficient effective power to recover their independence, although the substance of what generally passes for power was in all cases on the side of the *status quo*. To illustrate, Mao Tse-tung started in 1926 with 1,000 men, 200 rifles, rare organisational talents and an idea. By 1950, he had become master of the Chinese mainland. Gandhi liberated India and Pakistan with the help of his nonviolent satyagraha and paved the way for the freedom of Burma and Lanka (Ceylon). Instances may be multiplied. Ideas certainly belong to the realm of the spirit and dynamic ideas, 'keyed to the aspirations of frustrated and hungry people', can work wonders. Both the Communist and the non-Communist blocs are currently engaged in a battle royal for the capture of the minds of men all over the world. The propaganda apparatus of both have been working on the top gear for years for the conversion of men and women to their respective ideologies. Is not this propaganda itself a tacit admission that ideas are more important in human affairs than anything else? Revolutions, we all know, are, in the last analysis, the mastering of matter by the spirit of man.

Gandhi believed not only in the spirit, but in the unity of the spirit as well. The world, according to him, is one in its deepest roots and highest aspirations. He believed in the spiritual unity of the whole animate world. He told a Rangoon audience in 1929: 'The conception of my partriotism is nothing if it is not in every case without exception consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that, but my religion and my patriotism, derived from my religion, embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings callled human, but I want to realize the identity with all life,

10. *The New Dimensions of Peace* (Special Student Edition) by Chester Bowles, 14.

even with such beings as crawl on earth.'[11] The same spirit animates all life. Cruelty or injustice to the humblest life is, therefore, cruelty or injustice to all life, the author of the cruel or unjust act not excluded. But cruelty or injustice to one's own self is absurd, a contradiction in terms and, therefore, untrue. Gandhi, therefore, rejected the utilitarian doctrine, which 'in its nakedness means that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of (the remaining) 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed'.[12] He insisted on sarvodaya or the greatest good of all, which 'inevitably includes the good of the greater number'.[13]

Marxism, like so many schools of socio-political thought, believes that the end justifies the means. Marxists do not hesitate to fight for a cause by all the means—fair and foul—at their disposal, if they are convinced that the cause is a just one. To them, the cause is more important than the means. Lenin openly declared, 'It is necessary to use any ruse, cunning, unlawful method, evasion, concealment of truth'[14] for the attainment of the end in view. It must be admitted in fairness to the Marxists that the world at large also believes that any means may be adopted for the realization of a noble object. Some lawyers, for example, argue that to establish truth in a court of law, falsehood has sometimes to be resorted to. Truth, they seem to suggest, is pure gold and can serve a useful purpose only when an alloy has been added to it. They miss the all-important point that alloyed gold is no gold in the truest sense of the term. To adopt unfair means to achieve an object, however noble and laudable, is to taint the object itself. Equally bad, if not worse, is the very real danger of the ultimate degradation of those who adopt unfair means for the attainment of their objects, even noble ones. Practice of deceit and lies may in the long run result in these vices being ingrained in the character of those who practise them.

11. D.G. Tendulkar *op. cit.*, p. 464 (quoted).
12. *Diary*, Vol. I by Mahadev Desai, p. 201.
13. Gandhi in *Young India*, II, p. 956.
14. C. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 89 (quoted).

The 'theory that the good end justifies all means, even violent means', observes a student of Gandhian philosophy, 'is dangerous in practice and unsound ethically. The theory permits recourse to violence, fraud, untruth, opportunism etc. provided that the end is just. But these means, instead of helping us on the path of progress, lead us to regard human beings as means rather than ends, deaden our finer feelings and result in oppression and cruelty. Besides, there can generally be no certainty that a violent action is always motivated only by a good end. The tyrant and the terrorist invariably plead laudable ends when perpetrating the most dangerous crimes. Further, it is dangerous ethics to make the success of an action or policy the criterion of its propriety.'[15]

Means and ends are convertible terms in Gandhian philosophy. They, Gandhi insists, are inseparable and should be equaly pure. Not only should the end be a noble one, but the means for achieving it also must be moral and equally noble. Man can only work. He has no control over the consequences. We can control the means, not the end. The *Gita* also preaches the same truth.[16] The end grows out of the means. In Gandhi's own words, 'As the means so the end'.[17] He emphasized the same idea in *Hind Svaraj*: 'The means may be likened to the seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree'.[18] It will be readily admitted that a healthy tree cannot grow from a diseased or otherwise defective seed. Good effects also cannot be produced by bad causes. Gandhi, therefore, asserted that 'if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself'[19] Violence, falsehood, terror and deception may succeed for a time. They certainly produce quick results and may triumph for a time over truth and love, justice

15. *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* by Gopinath Dhawan, p. 55.
16. *Bhagavadgita*, 2.47.
17. *Young India*, II, p. 364.
18. P. 60.
19. *Harijan*, 11 February 1939, p. 8.

and open dealing. But victory achieved by these means is partial and transient. Lasting good and peace of the individual, of the community and of humanity can be ensured by honest means alone. The history of man bears testimony to what has been said above. Through ages, men have broken one another's heads again and again; time and again nations have gone to war against one another. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost, millions of men, women and children have been crippled, women have been dishonoured, properties worth billions have been destroyed—all in the name of justice, religion, freedom and the whole gamut of them. But the grand ideals for which the black deeds were perpetrated remain as far as ever.

The Gandhian emphasis on the importance of the means does not mean that the end is unimportant or of secondary importance. It rather means that the end and the means are inseparable. The means employed by us must not affect the moral character of the end or ends in view. Gandhi, therefore, insisted that the means adopted must be as pure as the end, that in regard to the means we must take our stand on 'the firm solid ground of unadulterated good'. Setbacks should not dampen our spirits.

Violence is indispensable in the social evolution of Marxist conception. Force, Marxists believe, is 'the mid-wife of the old order pregnant with the new'.[20] Some of the anarchists, such as, Bukharin, Kropotkin, the Russian Nihilists and the Revolutionary Syndicalists held a similar view. They as well as the Marxists dismiss nonviolence as a moralist's fad, an utterly inadequate technique of resistance. Violence, they declare in unison, is the only means of transforming society and 'of ridding it of war, capitalism and exploitation'. Marx was of opinion that in countries like England workers might be able to seize power by peaceful means. But force, he said, was indispensable for the rise of labour to power on the continent of Europe. 'England', he said, 'is the one country in which a peaceful revolution is possible, but history does not tell us so'.[21] Sydney

20. *Theory and Practice of Socialism* by Strachey.
21. Amsterdam Speech, 8 September 1872.

Hook sums up the opinion of Marx on the role of violence in social revolution in the following words: 'Against those who pinned their faith solely upon moral force Marx pointed to the non-moral reality of the state as the governmental arm of the nation's industry and to its source of power in the existence of special bodies of armed men not part of the working population but standing over against it. It followed that any attempt to capture state power must be prepared to meet the state forces if necessary on their own ground. . . .Marx argued that violence could succeed only when the social conditions ripe for a new order were at hand; that it must cap the process of organisation of labour and not precede it; that if it took the customary individual form rather than a social form, it invariably played into the hands of reaction. Advocacy of such tactics could therefore be characterised either as the expression of irresponsible petty bourgeois anarchism or as down-right police provocation.'[22]

Gandhi was a firm believer in ahimsa or nonviolence. His nonviolence, however, was not negative virtue. 'True ahimsa', he said, 'should mean a complete freedom from ill-will and anger and hate and an overwhelming love for all'.[23] Nonviolence is, in fact, a corollary of Gandhi's belief in the spiritual unity of all life. 'The basic principle on which the practice of nonviolence rests', he declared, 'is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe'.[24] To Gandhi, ahimsa is the heart of all religion, the means to the end, which is truth. His whole life was a ceaseless quest for truth, which he equated with God. What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal.'[25] 'The jewel of nonviolence was discovered' by Gandhi 'during the search

22. Article on 'Violence' in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. Vol. XV (1954 Edition), p, 266.
23. D.G. Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, p. 419 (quoted).
24. *Harijan*, 13 November 1938, p. 327.
25. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* by M.K. Gandhi, Introduction, p. xii (Navajivan Edition)

for and contemplation of truth'.[26] If truth is the highest law, nonviolence is the highest duty.

A believer in the existence of the Spirit, and he alone, can accept nonviolence as a principle of conduct; because 'man as animal is violent, but as spirit is nonviolent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within, he cannot remain violent,'[27] Gandhi's faith in nonviolence, we have seen above, springs from his belief in the spiritual unity of life. It is also an outcome of his conception of Truth. Man cannot fully grasp truth, not even the relative truth. What seems to be truth to one seeker may not be so to another. Yet each could be right from his own point of view. Gandhi, therefore, concludes that the pursuit of truth does not admit of violence being inflicted upon one's opponent. Gandhi in this respect shows himself to be a true son of India, a true Hindu. 'Live and let live' is the eternal message of India and of Hinduism to humanity. Peaceful co-existence, the guiding factor of free India's foreign policy, is the logical outcome of this attitude.

Gandhi, however, did not make a fetish of nonviolence. Resistance is the supreme duty in case of aggression, he declared. To resist nonviolently is the most manly course. But to those who do not believe in nonviolence, or accept it as a principle of conduct 'violent resistance was also a duty—the first and foremost'.[28] Nonviolence is cowardice in such a case. 'I do believe', Gandhi declared, 'that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. . . . Abstinence is forgiveness only when there is power to punish.'[29] He told a German interviewer in November 1933, 'Submission is cowardice, and cowardice is not nonviolence'.[30]

Marxists are never tired of preaching hatred against their opponents. Stalin, for exampie, declared during the last war, 'You cannot conquer the enemy without learning to hate him

26. Gandhi in the Foreword to *The Gandhian Way* by J.B. Kripalani.
27. Gandhi in *Harijan*, 11 August 1940.
28. C. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
29. *Young India*, 11 August 1920.
30. C. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 73 (quoted).

with all the power of your soul'.[31] Alexei Tolstoy, another Soviet worthy, declared, 'Man must awake with this stubborn hate, hate unslaked'.[32] The Bolsheviks used terror as a weapon to achieve their objective and, according 'to the least incredible estimate', 70,000 faced the firing squad in 1918-19. We have it on the authority of Sir Winston Churchill that 'not less than 5,000 officers above the rank of captain were liquidated'[33] during the purge of 1937. No quarter was given to the kulaks (rich farmers) when they opposed collectivisation of their holdings in 1929.

What has happened in China? Frank Moraes estimated after a visit to that country that by mid-1952 there were two million executions in the People's Republic of China. Others guess them at five million. The Communists came to power in China, it must be remembered, in October 1949.

Gandhi was a tireless crusader against evil and injustice in any shape or form. But he was absolutely free from malice and hatred against the unjust and the wrong-doer. He hated the sin, not the sinner. Time and again was he subjected to lynching and held up to ridicule. Never did he think of retaliation. One has only to recall the murderous assault on Gandhi by the infuriated Europeans in Durban (1896), the almost fatal assault by Mir Alam in Johannesburg (1908), the assault by Sanatanists at Jassidih, Bihar (April 1934), the bomb incident in Poona (June 1934), the attack by Muslim rowdies during evening prayer at Rajkot (1939), the attack by Hindu youths in Calcutta (August 1947), the bomb thrown at the prayer-meeting at Birla House, New Delhi (20 January 1948) and his assassination ten days later (30 January 1948) when he was on his way to the prayer-ground of the same Birla House. His only words after he had been hit were, 'He Ram' (O God!). These incidents clearly show how free from malice and hatred for the sinner he was. He told some Muslim visitors not long before his death, 'Ahimsa is always tested in the midst of himsa, kindness in the midst of cruelty, truth in the midst of falsehood, love in the midst of hate. This

31. *Mother Russia* by Maurice Hindus, p. 108 (quoted).
32. *Ibid.*, p. 111 (quoted).
33. *The Second World War*, Vol. II, p. 259.

is the eternal law. If . . . we all make a sacred resolve not to spill blood but offer ours to be shed instead, we would make history. . . . Jesus Christ prayed God from the Cross to forgive those who crucified him. It is my constant prayer to God that He may give me the strength to intercede even for my assassin. And it should be your prayer, too, that your faithful servant [i.e. Gandhi] may be given that strength to forgive.'[34]

'The manner of his (i.e. Gandhi's) death . . .', observes a biographer, 'was in keeping with his life. Greater love hath no man than this that he lays down his life for his people, and he did so, in harness, unto the last'.[35]

Gandhi's prescription for the elimination of economic evils and iniquities is a direct outcome of his endless patience with the wrong-doer and a boundless compassion for him. He did not think that all rich men are bad. Nor did he believe that all poor men are good. The rich, as individuals, are not beyond redemption. Gandhi, unlike the Communists, had an unshakable faith in the essential goodness of human nature. He did not, therefore, want the physical annihilation of the propertied classes. They are to be redeemed and made useful to society. 'Those who seek to destroy men rather than their manners', Gandhi warned, 'adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.'[36] Class war, in Gandhi's opinion, 'is foreign to the essential genius of India, which is capable of evolving Communism on the fundamental rights of all, on equal justice. Ramarajya [of his dream] ensures the rights alike of prince and pauper.'[37]

Trusteeship is the Gandhian alternative to the class-war so dear to the Communist heart. The rich are to be persuaded to use their talents and the bulk of their income as a trust for the

34. *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, by Pyarelal, p. 511 (quoted).
35. *Gandhiji—A Study* by Hiren Mukerjee, p. 184.
36. D.G. Tendulkar, *op. cit.*, p. 337 (quoted).
37. 'Gandhi to Zamindars' in *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 2 August 1934.

good of the community. As trustees a reasonable rate of commission will be allowed to them in recognition of their service or usefulness to society. During the transition period, the rate would be determined 'on a reasonable basis by themselves in consultation with society'. Trusteeship thus provides a means of transforming the present capitalist society into an egalitarian one by peaceful means. It does not, however, exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth. Production 'will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed'.

Nonviolence won independence for India at a minimum cost. Other factors too played their part. Bloodshed and loss of life and property, it must be admitted, could not be altogether avoided. But for Gandhian leadership, both might have been catastrophic. They are to be attributed, in the first place, to an imperfect acceptance—acceptance as a policy, not as a creed—of nonviolence by the nation. Besides, fifth columnists and boot-lickers and communalists spared no pains to sabotage the national struggle. The fact, however, stands that in the whole history of man we do not find another example of so many millions being liberated from foreign rule with so little violence and bloodshed. Never in history and nowhere was a natural movement 'conducted with so little animus'. Few national movements, particulary successful ones, ever left so thin a trail of bitterness behind. At the height of the national struggle, 'an Englishman could walk through an Indian crowd without anybody touching him'[38].

Marx did not believe in God or religion. Religion was to him 'the sob of the oppressed creature', 'the head of a heartless world' and 'the opium of the poor'. To Engels, 'the first word of religion is a lie'. 'Religion', declared Lenin, 'is one of the aspects of spiritual oppression'. Religion we are told, is a fraud wich asks the people to mortgage their life here on earth against one in the next world, which does not exist. Marx argued that people

38. Nehru's address to the African Students' Congress, Delhi, 1954 (*vide* Chester Bowles, *op. cit.*, p. 166).

believed in an unseen and unknown agency, i.e. God, because they find themselves powerless and helpless against the social forces, forces over wich they have no control. Under communism, man will master the social forces. Belief in God will be superfluous and religion will 'wither away'. It must be admitted, however, that we ourselves have given a handle to Marx and Marxists by dogmatizing and institutionalizing religion by the 'artificial, greasy and dishonest way in which we practise our religion'.

To Gandhi, on the other hand, God and religion were the very breath of his nostrils. Religion, he believed, "sustains a person as nothing else does. It is the rock-bottom of fundamental moality. When morality incarnates itself in a living man, it becomes religion, because it binds, it holds, it sustains him in the hour of trial.'[39] 'My life', Gandhi declared, 'is governed by religion. . . . even my politics are derived from my religion. I never lost sight of the principle that governs my life when I began dabbling in politics.'[40] Gandhi, observes Romain Rolland, 'introduced into human politics the strongest religious impetus of the last two thousand years'.[41] He asked the sceptic 'to reinstate religion in his heart'.

What Gandhi actually meant by religion and God is best described in his own words: 'I often described my religion as the religion of Truth. Of late, instead of saying God is Truth, I have been saying Truth is God, in order more fully to define my religion. . . . Nothing so completly describes my God as Truth. Denial of God we have known. Denial of Truth we have not known. The most ignorant among mankind have some truth in them. We are all sparks of Truth. The sumtotal of these sparks is the indescribable, as yet unknown Truth which is God. I am being daily led to it by constant prayer.'[42]

It is, we hope, clear from what has been said in the foregoing

39. C. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 103 (quoted).
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Mahatma Gandhi.*
42. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan and Muirhead, p. 21 (quoted).

pages that Gandhi and Marx stand poles apart, similarity of their objectives notwithstanding. Their differences are basic and fundamental and hence unbridgeable. Gandhi did not mince matters and openly declared: 'Socialism and Communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.'[43]

Vinoba Bhave is one of the very few Indians whose opinion on Gandhian philosophy may be regarded as authoritative. He is on record as having said, 'The fact of the matter is that these two ideologies (i.e. the Gandhian and the Marxist) are irreconcilable; the difference between them is fundamental. . . . It is as clear as day that they are opposed to each other. . . . The two ideologies stand face to face, each bent on swallowing up the other. . . . I believe that ultimately it will be Gandhism with which Communism will have its trial of strength.'[44]

Marxists themselves have been long aware of the probability —shall we say the inevitability?—of a show-down between their ideology and Gandhi's for the capture of the minds of men. They declared more than thirty years ago in 1928: 'Gandhism is more and more becoming an ideology directed against mass revolution. *It must be strongly combated by Communism.*'[45] The Communist vendetta against Gandhi continued evcn after his assassination. As recently as in 1954, a new edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia vulgarly attacked him as a 'reactionary, a descendant of usurers', an 'exploiter of religious prejudices', who 'aped the ascetics in a demagogic way' and actively helped

43. *Selections from Gandhi* (2nd Edition) by Nirmal Kumar Bose, p.92
44. Chester Bowles, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-56 (quoted).
45. C. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 97 (quoted).

British imperialism against the Zulus in South Africa.[46] (We understand that these and similar objectionable expressions have been removed from a subsequent edition of the said work.)

A question has been asked again and again since Gandhi's appearance on the Indian political scene and more particularly since his martyrdom. Can mankind rise to the dizzy heights of moral perfection which a full acceptance of the Gandhian philosophy presupposes? A categorical answer is difficult, if not impossible. All we dare say is that this world of ours may not be a natural home for perfection, 'which Gandhi felt in his best moments, was not a mere moralist's fad. It may be something of an illusion, but it is by such illusions that men rise to greatness.'[47]

46. Chester Bowles, *op. cit.*, p. 138 (quoted).
47. Hiren Mukerjee, *op. cit*,, p. 209.

Romain Rolland and Gandhi

V. V. RAMANA MURTI

Who is the greatest man in the world today? It was to answer this highly controversial question that John Haynes Holmes (1879-1964) Minister of the Community Church, New York city delivered a sermon on 10 April 1921. His first thought was of Romain Rolland. In the course of his famous address, Holmes remarked: 'The first man whom I would name is the Frenchman, Romain Rolland, author of that immortal novel, *Jean Christophe*, pacifist exile from his native land during the Great War, the leading internationalist in this perplexing period of the aftermath of the world. Rolland is supremely great in the field . . .of ideals.'[1]

The influence of Leo Tolstoy on Rolland's life and thought was recalled by Holmes. During the stormy period of WorldWar I and its tragic aftermath, Rolland remained a true Tolstoyan and never wavered in his loyalty to the cause of peace. His great motto was 'Above the battle', which he never forsook in all the critical phases of the terrible crisis. Abuse and opposition were hurled against him for protesting against 'the herd instinct'.

He was condemned in France for betraying the fatherland and disowning the national spirit. In Germany, his plea for humanity and reason was equally misrepresented. Rolland was denounced by the people and the press in both the countries with equal vigour. The militarists in France as well as in Germany found in him a mighty challenge that refused to compromise. It required the highest courage and faith to fight against mass passions, to keep alive the light amidst the darkness. But Romain Rolland

1. John Haynes Holmes, *Who is the Greatest Man in tha World Today?* (The Community Church: New York city), Series 1920-21—No, XIX; p. 5.

was never in doubt or despair in discharging his mission. He constantly strove for the brotherhood of man, and laboured unceasingly for the law of love among the nations.

If Rolland was lacking in one thing, it was perhaps in the realm of realism only. He was seized with the fullness of the ideal, the vision of which absorbed him completely. The intricacies of practical affairs and the laws of the secular domain left him unchanged in his preeminent vocation. Rolland was as much averse to worldly success as his master, Leo Tolstoy. In both cases, it was the supremacy of the spirit that was vindicated. Their idealistic fervour would not entertain the requisite concern and patience to successfully translate all the ideas and dreams they cherished into reality.

This shortcoming in the life-work of Rolland, that he was not basically a realist, should not undermine the significance of his contribution or the extent of his influence. In a way, it was not entirely just to charge Rolland with having failed by the current standards of practical affairs. As Holmes reviewed Rolland's position, the question of his failure did not arise for the simple reason that Rolland did not enter at all into the realm of realism. Like Tolstoy, Rolland wholly belonged to the domain of art. His duy, as he visualized it, was essentially in the service of thought. And to discover insufficiency of action in him would only be to state the obvious.

This does not, however, answer the question that Holmes posed to his congregation in 1921. It was not enough if the greatest man of the world remained only an idealist. He should also be a realist in order to be perfect. It was agreed that Romain Rolland was undoubtedly an unenviable example of pure idealism. If idealism could be combined with realism, it should fulfil the rare qualifications of a complete man. Holmes was searching for such a person to be named as the greatest. He exclaims: 'What we need is a universal man—a man who combines in perfect balance the supreme qualities of . . . an idealist and a realist. . . . Is there any such person living in the world?'

Holmes replied to this question in the affirmitive. He hailed Gandhi as 'unquestionably the greatest man living in the world

. . .and one of the greatest men who has ever lived'.[2] His reason for this surprisingly bold assertion (it certainly took the world by surprise when it was uttered) was that he found in Gandhi a synthesis of idealism and realism. They both merged into the natural harmony which characterized Gandhi's life-work. In a moving chapter, 'I Discover Gandhi', in a subsequent book, Holmes recalled the portrait he had drawn of Gandhi to his listeners years ago: 'Such is Mahatma Gandhi. . . . In his personal character, he is simple and undefiled. In his political endeavours, he is as stern a realist. . . . At the same time is he an idealist, living ever in the pure radiance of the spirit.'[3]

This assessment of Gandhi, made at a time when he was not widely known to the outside world, would seem to be remarkably accurate. His idea of nonviolence might have been rooted in the spiritual milieu. But Gandhi was not simply a visionary. He was determined to experiment with nonviolent techniques for achieving secular ends. This acceptance of ethical means for the purpose of achieving political, economic and social objectives fundamentally distinguished Gandhi from the simple idealists as well as from the mere realists. Gandhi says in one of his basic writings, entitled 'The Doctrine of the Sword': 'I claim to be a practical idealist'.[4]

Gandhi's nature was, therefore, different from Rolland's. One was primarily a genius of action: the other was a literary genius of exceptional integrity. In the history of the world, Gandhi was a phenomenon. Rolland was a solitary giant in the realm of art. The comparison of their characters might be extended, and many more differences brought out. What is, however, more important is not marking the points of superficial contrast between Gandhi and Rolland. Such an exercise can be misleading also. It is far more essential to underline the similar characteristics they both shared. We cannot miss their common inspiration: it was Tolstoy that awkened Rolland as well as Gandhi. They both cherished a

2. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
3. *Cf.* John Haynes Holmes, *My Gandhi*, p. 31. (Harper and Brothers: New York, 1953).
4. M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 11 August 1920.

deep and profound concern for Truth, which they held as a common source of ever-lasting inspiration. The last phase of the two Tolstoyans was a crowning tragedy. It was full of infinite misery and lonelinesss. At the same time, they were confronted with an increasing repudiation of their faith. Gandhi and Rolland remained at their post undaunted in meeting the bitter crisis, and lived to the last in the heroic spirit.

Romain Rolland's *Mahatma Gandhi* was an eventful offering. When it was first published in 1924, it at once commanded the widest possible attention in the West. This biographical piece by one of the leading literary writers of the age evoked a sympathetic interest in the Indian question and its impact on the world political situation. It was largely instrumental in acquainting the European public with the life-work of Gandhi.

Though the first biography of Gandhi was written by Rev. Joseph Doke in 1908, with intimate knowledge and genuine admiration, it was confined to an early phase of Gandhi's life in South Africa. In 1908, the movement of civil resistance that Gandhi was leading for the equitable rights of the Indians was still in its beginning, and had not achieved the success it subsequently did with the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement in 1914.

Rolland's book, in the nature of a literary piece, opens with a picturesque description of Gandhi's personality as he imagined it. Rolland had not yet met him at that time. He knew Gandhi only through his writings and the reports he gathered from eminent Indians whom he met in France. Rolland's biography of Gandhi was completed in 1922. It ended with the "Great Trial" on 18 March 1922 when Gandhi was sentenced to imprisonment for six years for preaching disaffection towards the Government of India.

The career of Gandhi in South Africa as well as in India was depicted by Rolland with the fervour of an ardent enthusiast. His insight into the various influences that shaped Gandhi's ideas was profound. What was even more striking was Rolland's faith in the spiritual message of Gandhi. In his view, it was not limited to India and the East alone; it was meant also for the war-torn West in its quest for the values of life.

The crowning part of Rolland's book, however, was the controversy between Gandhi and Tagore over the burning of foreign cloth in 1920. Their respective view- points on this question were cited and commented at great length. While admiring in the fullest measure Gandhi's mission, and its spiritual significance, Tagore had genuine misgivings about some of the extreme features of the movement of nonviolent non-cooperation. Writing on 10 April 1921, Tagore declared that 'We are grateful to Gandhi for giving India a chance to prove that her faith in the divine spirit of man is still living'.[5] He feared that the political campaign was taking a turn towards the negative side when the stress of its revered leader was exclusively concentrated on the boycott of alien educational institutions, replacement of foreign cloth by home-spun fabrics, revival of hand spinning through the charkha or the Indian spinning wheel, the spread of the national culture known as swadeshi and other measures of non-cooperation with the foreign government. The main doctrines of Gandhi were admirable, and Tagore never doubted their validity and necessity. But he was aware of the limitations of the followers of Gandhi who, in their over-enthusiasm, could be mistaken in their understanding of the whole message of Gandhi. In his letter of 7 September 1920, Tagore wrote: 'It is criminal to transform moral force into force'.[6]

Gandhi's replies to Tagore were couched in courteous words but firm terms. He would refer to Tagore as the 'Great Sentinel' and Tagore was the first outstanding Indian to greet him as 'Mahatma'. In the rejoinder written in his journal, *Young India* (13 October 1921) Gandhi readily acknowledges Tagore's warnings but reiterates his views by pointing out the inexorable necessity of India's freedom from foreign rule. Gandhi pleads that 'India is a house on fire' and there is no justification for evading the duty we owe to our countrymen.[7] Gandhi does not admit that the non-cooperation campaign is

5. *Cf.* Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 147. (The Century Co.: New York & London) 1924.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
7. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. II; p. 82 (1951).

negative or directed in hostility against the West. This is an historic necessity for a subject nation for realizing the freedom which is indispensable for her life. 'India must learn to live', says Gandhi, 'before she can aspire to die for humanity'.[8]

Romain Rolland's comments on this debate between the two great men of modern India are interesting. While revealing Rolland's close acquaintance with Indian developments, they also suggest where his own innate sympathies lay. He knows that 'Gandhi's real doctrine is much broader, much more human, and much more universal' than is realized by most of his followers. In an important footnote to this, however, Rolland makes his own choice clear when he adds: ' . . . Gandhi is as universal as Tagore, but in a different way. Gandhi is a universalist through his religious feelings; Tagore is intellectually universal . . . Gandhi is a universalist of the Middle Ages. While venerating him, we understand and approve Tagore.'[9] Romain Rolland had written his *Mahatma Gandhi* from a Tagorean view-point.

For explaining Tagore's position, Rolland gives the example of Goethe, the cosmopolitan Weltburger who refuses to disown the treasures of French civilization and culture. Tagore likewise declines to reject the achievements of the West in the service of man. He breathes a spirit of internationalism in his vocation as a poet and philosopher. All the fears and doubts, misgivings and misunderstandings Tagore has with Gandhi arise from the source of his powerful nationalism. Gandhi's nationalism was not exclusive even in 1921, and he would proclaim that his patriotism would never diminish the love of the entire world, and devotion for its welfare. However, it cannot be denied that the sole mission of Gandhi is dedicated to the liberation of his country, and nationalism is implicit in him. It was not unnatural that some of his impulses and actions as an unchallenged national leader should remain perplexing to Tagore who was not primarily a nationalist.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
9. Romain Rolland, *Op. Cit.*, p. 179,

They saw in the burning of foreign cloth by Indians in 1921 a dangerous turning point. Their fear was that it would arouse the mob fury in alarming proportions, and it might lead to a destruction that could not be controlled. In this tense atmosphere the ultimate ideal and the positive goal might be lost for ever; mere passion and devastation might prevail over reason and good sense. Another controversy between them arose thirteen years after this episode, when Bihar was devastated by an earthquake on 15 January 1934 and Gandhi regarded the calamity as a divine retribution for the sin of untouchability. It was left to Tagore to argue with Gandhi against the irrationality of this interpretation. He pleaded for a scientific explanation of the cosmic phenomenon, and not an intermingling of the supernatural with secular affairs. Rolland might have expressed himself in the same way.[10]

The purity of Gandhi's intentions and actions was not in doubt in this case. What Tagore implied and Rolland shared was the possibility that not all the followers of Gandhi might succeed in rightly understanding his message in its true light. There was much scope for distortion, and many chances of deviation. The latent power of the Gandhian technique might all the more be abused on this account. Therefore, the responsibility of a born leader of Gandhi's power was of far greater concern to his genuine admirers who believed in his moral eminence.

These reservations on the basic question of Gandhi's nationalism are inevitable in the case of Rolland who was a born internationalist. He heartily commends the ethical approach of Gandhi to politics, but is not reconciled to its successful working out in an imperfect social order. One of the notable Indians whom Romain Rolland met during this period of his writing on Gandhi was Dilip Kumar Roy, the famous singer and philosopher. Telling Roy how much he admired Gandhi, Rolland

10. In 1934, Romain Rolland was far less concerned with Indian politics. He was absorbed in the European question with the rise of Nazism and Fascism as a grave threat to humanity. In his Journal on India, Rolland would only note the bare facts of the earthquake. See Romain Rolland, *Inde*, pp. 449-450. (Editions Albin Michel, Paris) 1960,

remarked: 'The Mahatma is indeed wonderful. . . . The only thing I object to in him is that his outlook is not international, but national.'[11]

His critical evaluation of Gandhi, however, did not come in the way of his immense faith in him. The miraculous transformation that is wrought by this faith is vindicated by Mira Behn (Miss Madeleine Slade). A moving account of her testimony is given in her autobiography, which she has characteristically called *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*. Madeleine Slade's early interest in music had drawn her to Beethoven, and her quest for Beethoven had led her to Romain Rolland. Then it was Rolland who guided her footsteps to Gandhi. Rolland's *Mahatma Gandhi* revealed to Mira Behn her master, whom she has served throughout her life with a rare sense of dedication. Born and bred in the England in affluent environment of a proud aristocracy, she came to serve the cause of Indian freedom by identifying herself completely with the life-work of Gandhi. Her unusual life marks a confluence of the triple influence of Beethoven, Rolland and Gandhi.

How much Gandhi himself valued this precious treasure was expressed by him in a letter he wrote on Mira Behn's coming to his ashram at Sabarmati. Writing to Romain Rolland on 13 November 1925, Gandhi observed:

> Dear Friend,—I have your very kind letter. Miss Slade quickly followed it. What a treasure you have sent me! I shall try to be worthy of the great trust. I shall leave no stone unturned to assist her to become a bridge between East and West. I am too imperfect to have disciples. She shall be a fellow-seeker with me and as I am older in years and therefore presumably in spiritual experience I propose to share the honour of fatherhood with you. Miss Slade is showing wonderful adaptability and has already put us at ease about her self. I must leave the rest to be told you by Miss Slade whom I am asking to tell you all about a French sister who

11. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Among the Great*, p. 42 (Nalanda Publications, Bombay) 1947.

came to the Ashram just a few days before she came.[12]

When Gandhi and Rolland met, for the first and last time in December 1931 at Villeneuve in Switzerland, it was destined to be a momentous occasion for both of them to have an exchange of ideas and views on problems of common concern. They were eagerly waiting for such an opportunity for long. When Gandhi was on his way from India to London to participate in the historic Round Table Conference he was received by Madeleine Rolland, sister of Romain Rolland at Marseilles on 11 September 1931. She came on behalf of her ailing brother to welcome Gandhi. In the short speeeh he delivered in reply to a reception at Marseilles, Gandhi gratefully acknowledged Rolland's distinguished contribution as an interpreter between the East and the West.

On Gandhi's part, his nationalist movement was emerging as a potential force in India by now. The movement of civil resistance to abolish the Salt Tax that the Indian National Congress launched in 1930 under Gandhi's inspiration undoubtedly enhanced the national will for liberation. The British Viceroy in India, Lord Irwin, was compelled to recognize the claim of Indian nationalism, and the negotiations he conducted with Gandhi subsequently resulted in the Gandhi Irwin Pact of 1931. The nonviolent strategy of Gandhi was once more tested and another proof of its innate character was confirmed in this conciliation between an imperialist government and a subject people. It was as an unofficial but undisputed representative of the Indian people that Gandhi undertook to plead with the members of the British Government in London. His nationalism obviously had made much progress since Rolland evaluated it a decade ago.

Such a situation offered an appropriate occasion for Rolland to arrive at a more congenial and convincing appraisal of Gandhi's intricate ideas and action. But he was, at that time, too deeply immersed in the contemporary crisis of the West to

12. *Cf.* Romain Rolland, *Inde*, p. 104, (Editions Albin Michel, Paris) 1960.

undertake a balanced review of the entire question. The clouds of war were hanging over Europe. The uneasy truce the victorious powers had made with the defeated nations was avenging itself. In particular, the political and economic conditions in Germany and Italy were disturbing and the totalitarian cult was taking deep roots. Inequality and injustice had always moved Rolland. He considered them a violation of truth, and he reacted to them as vigorously as to untruth. It evoked all the fighting qualities in him which he unfailingly marshalled in its vindication against all the opposition of the world. His humanism asserted itself with an instinctive revolt agaist these wrongs of mankind. It was this impulse that had drawn Rolland close to the Soviet Union. The mighty revolution that Lenin led in 1917 for the ending of the economic exploitation of the working class and the eastablishment of an egalitarian social order had a lasting impact upon him.

The new theme that was uppermost in Rolland's mind was indicated by him when he started his first of a series of talks with Gandhi on 6 December 1931. Recalling the great qualities of Lenin, the architect of the Russian Revolution, Rolland expressed his regret that Gandhi never met Lenin. Rolland told Gandhi: 'Lenin like you never compromised with truth'.[13] This remark was significant on the part of Rolland who had compared Gandhi with Tolstoy earlier in his biography of Gandhi. Then he went on to reveal his concern about the worsening atmosphere in Europe. He was moved by the tragic circumstances that were encircling Europe. 'How I wish I was twenty years younger', Rolland exclaimed, 'so that I might have carried on a fierce battle against the destructive forces'. Madeleine Rolland, who was present and acted as an interpreter between Rolland and Gandhi, noted the warmth of this scene. As Rolland spoke those words, he drew near Gandhi to clasp his hands and hold them tight for a while. As it happened earlier when Mira Behn went to see Romain Rolland for the first time in the same place, the saul-like gaze of Rolland's blue eyes was all turned on

13. See D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 174 (1952).

Gandhi.

Rolland declared that the working classes alone were the real party above every faction or interest. He explained to Gandhi the enormous ordeal that the Soviet Union was going through in discharging its foremost task. Rolland's sympathies with the Soviet Union were obvious; but the governing motive in Rolland's case was his sweeping humanitarianism. As he described at length the devastating effects of exploitation, none could miss his fervour and sincerity. He believed in the efficacy of a social doctrine that made no distinction between man and man on the basis of class and property.

This topic was resumed by Rolland in his discussions with Gandhi on the last day of his stay, on 11 Debember 1931. The Editor of a Paris magazine, *The Proletarian Revolution*, submitted some questions to Gandhi. Rolland requested Gandhi to deal with them. Answering a query, Gandhi asserted that 'labour is the only power in the world'.[14] What was most important was that workmen should know their rights and how to assert them. If only the workers were perfectly organized, they could dictate terms to the employers. This faith of Gandhi was not shared by Rolland who feared the many devices the capitalists might employ to defeat the aims of the working classes. Rolland argued that employers might divide the workers, and other methods might be used by them against the exploited.

Gandhi did not agree with the view that a minority dictatorship of the proletariat might be necessary. Nor did he consent to the use of force by the working classes for gaining their objectives. Did Gandhi tell Rolland the example of the strike of the textile workers that he successfully led at Ahmedabad years ago in 1918? He was able to solve the acute problem of the unrest among the working classes by employing the non-violent means of persuasion and arbitration. But Rolland was in no mood to seriously consider the Gandhian alternative. The subject was quickly changed.

14. See Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 293-294 (Harper and Brothers, New York), 1950.

Rolland and Gandhi discussed not only the topics of the moment, but also the problem of all time. Their vision was extended to eternity. In the course of the talks they held on 10 December 1931, the role of art was discussed. Rolland was gratified to hear Gandhi refuting the formula of 'Art for art's sake'. The two Tolstoyans held the same view on the mission of the creative artist. Gandhi regarded that 'all art must be based on truth'. He made no distinction between truthand art. Rolland never subscribed to the popular view of art's being for the sake of art which he always disputed throughout his life with a Tolstoyan fervour. The two Tolstoyans had no difference on this subject. But Rolland emphasized the Goethean concept of the Sturm und Drang ('storm and stress') in man's search for truth. The infinite pain that was involved in this pursuit was brought out by Rolland, the great artist whose vast experience had eminently qualified him to pass his conclusive verdict on this matter.

The same day was memorable for the exchange of ideas between Rolland and Gandhi on the most significant aspect of truth. Both of them were born seekers after truth. Rolland spoke of his God of truth. Gandhi told Rolland his view on this. God and truth were completely interwoven by him. Gandhl said: 'La Verite est Dieu'[15] ('Truth is God').

Gandhi made this unique statement first when he was asked to address a gathering of conscientious objectors at Geneva on 10 Deeember 1931. In his spech Gandhi explained the whole process of his thinking on this perennial question and how he arrived at his present conclusion. He said: 'In my early youth I was taught. . . . God has as many names as there are creatures . . . But deep down in me I used to say that . . . God is Truth, above all. . . . I have come to the conclusion that God is Truth. Two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, "God is Truth", and "Truth is God". I came to that conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after truth which began

15. Romain Rolland, *Inde*, p. 346.

fifty years ago.'[16]

It was this historic statement of Gandhi that Rolland recalled in his talks with Gandhi. The discovery that 'Truth is God' was of crucial importance to Gandhi and the evolution of his thought. Truth is ever a cardinal characteristic of philosophical speculation in India. Hinduism always recognized 'truth' as one of the basic attributes of the divine life. While truth is only one of the many concepts in the ancient scriptures of the Hindus, it has been singularly revived by Gandhi as the one main and fundamental basis of life. Gandhi travelled by many mysterious routes before he reached the destination of his journey and realized the universal nature of truth. It was of utmost interest that Gandhi should have shared his profound experience with Rolland on this subject.

The meeting between Gandhi and Rolland symbolically ended with the choicest music. On Gandhi's request, Rolland played the andante from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Rolland regarded music as a sadhana, the spiritual nature of which never failed him. Rolland added Gluck's *Elysian Fields* to his Beethoven. The themes of the composers coincided with Gandhi's heroic soul.

Though weak and just recovering from bronchitis, Rolland insisted on giving Gandhi a touching farewell at the railway station on the evening of 11 December 1931. Pyarelal, who was a member of Gandhi's party, reports the conversation that went on between the two great friends. Rolland asked Gandhi: 'What would you like me to do in grateful memory of your visit? Interpret India's nonviolent struggle to the world? Learn Hindustani?' Gandhi replied: 'Come and meet India'.[17] His cherished hope did not come true. Rolland was eager to visit India, which he regarded as the land from which he once came. But this could not materialize for personal reasons. How much Gandhi valued his visit to Rolland was expressed by Gandhi in one of his reports about the European sojourn. In an article he

16. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 176.
17. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 105. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad) 1956.

sent for *Young India*, Gandhi wrote: 'Last, but not laest was, my pilgrimage to Romain Rolland, the sage of Villeneuve. Could I have left India just to visit him and his inseparable sister, Madeleine, his interpreter and friend, I would have undertaken the voyage.'[18]

The one week that Gandhi spent with Rolland left a lasting impression on both. Their general appreciation of each other's ideas and action certainly increased. But the gulf that existed between them from the beginning was not bridged sufficiently. This was more noticeable with reference to the political and social problems of Europe. When Gandhi informed Rolland about his proposed visit to Mussolini, Rolland strongly pleaded with him to be on his guard against the sinister intentions of the Fascist regime. In this case, Rolland acted as a friend and counsellor to Gandhi. Rolland undertook a similar service to Rabindranath Tagore, when he visited Europe. With his deep knowledge of Fascism and actual experience with its working, Rolland warned Gandhi that his visit to Italy could be exploited by Mussolini. It was only after Gandhi agreed to Rolland's advice, that he should insist on certain conditions during his stay at Rome, that the matter was finally settled. Gandhi kept his promise to Rolland when he went to Italy from Switzerland. He refused to stay as a guest of the Italian government, and stayed with a friend of Rolland's, Generel Morris.

Gandhi and Rolland thought of the future and its likely problems. The attitude to the coming war engaged their minds intensely. Another world war loomed large on the horizons of Europe. Gandhi and Rolland belonged to a generation that had suffered a world war once before in 1914. The perils of another global conflict were too terrible to contemplate. The crucial issue was to decide the alternative to war. On this problem, Gandhi said: 'If one nation possessed the heroism to submit without answering violence with violence, it would be the most effective lesson. But for this an absolute faith is necessary.' Rolland's

18. See Homer A. Jack, *The Gandhi Reader*, p. 382. (Indiana University Press: Bloomington) 1956.

remark on this view was significant. He said: 'Nothing should be done by halves, no matter whether it is bad or good.' The discussion was not continued, but was left at that point.

These differences remained between Gandhi and Rolland in the following decade and after. They did not lead to an opposition or conflict, but they gradually lessened the agreement between their basic view-points. It was more visible on the economic and political questions. Rolland was increasingly preoccupied at that time with the ideal of social change, which he believed to be imminent for removing the exploitation of man by man. Writing in January 1932, in support of civil disobedience in India, Rolland renewed his comparison between Gandhi and Lenin. He never doubted the momentous significance of Gandhi's satyagraha for the question of social transformation and its means. Gandhi was unique in experimenting with non-violence while Lenin employed violence for transforming the social order. Rolland observed, rather prophetically: 'It is either Gandhi or Lenin. In any case social justice will be done.'[19]

The coming events in Gandhi's life, particularly in 1932 and 1933, revealed the warmest feelings Rolland cherished towards Gandhi. When Gandhi decided to undertake a fast to dcath on 20 September 1932, to resist the communal award of the British Government to give a separate electrorate to the untouchables in India, he wrote to his most intimate friends for approval and strength in his superhuman travail. Gandhi wrote to Romain Rolland on 16 September 1932:

> Dear friend and brother,—On the eve of taking the momentous step in my life, I would like to tell you how I prize those days I had with you and your great and devoted sister. Mahadev Desai is with me. We often think of you.
>
> I wonder how you have felt over the contemplated step. I can only say that it was decided upon in obedience to the imperative vioce of conscience.[20]

19. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol. III, p. 194.
20. Romain Rolland, *Inde*, p. 401.

Gandhi wrote in a similar vein to Tagore, whose blessings he sought to sustain him in the epic fast. The moving developments that took place in the prison at Yeravada, where the jailed Gandhi was on the verge of sacrificing his very life, were closely followed by Rolland. Tagore delivered an address on the day of Gandhi's fast in his school at Santiniketan. Tagore observed in this address on 20 September 1932: 'A shadow is darkening today over India. . . . Mahatmaji has commenced his vow of extreme self-sacrifice. . . . The penance which Mahatmaji has taken upon himself is not a ritual but a message to all India and to the world.' Like Tagore, Rolland also noted in the journal his constant concern for Gandhi's life during the epic fast. The news of the Poona Pact, which was instumental in saving Gandhi's life, was hailed by Rolland on hearing it. He cabled to Gandhi on 27 Septembsr 1932 (morning): 'Heureux de votre grande victorie de l'ame' ('Rejoice at your great victory of the soul").

In passing through the 'Anguish of September' (1932) Gandhi found in Rolland a kindred spirit. On 30 September 1932, Gandhi wrote to the Rollands:

> My dear friends,—I had your loving message. You were ever present to me during the travail. God's mercy was bountiful and traceable during the whole of the great drama.
> —My love, Bapu.[21]

As Gandhi decided to undertake a fast for twenty-one days for the sake of self-purification on 8 May 1933, Rolland sent his messasge again to Gandhi. Rolland wrote to Gandhi: 'We are with you in these grave days when your life is again at stake. We send forth our fervent prayers . . . . Please permit me to attach to your sacrifice a larger meaning. . . . In these tragic times when the whole world is given over to the most atrocious violence . . . . your immolation before the Goddess of Justice, who is all love and without violence, acquires a universal and sacred value—like the cross.' 'Ever with you' was Rolland's greeting to Gandhi.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 409.

He found in Gandhi a contrast to the familiar pacifism of the West which was too often based on compromise and inaction. Rolland firmly believed that the contemporary pacifists did not do real service to the cause of peace by their professions and actions. In a comprehensive study of Romain Rolland, W. T. Starr observes: 'His pacifism is then based on direct action, and on the principles of love and faith as motives of our acts, and on sacrifice of self in a noble cause. This is what he found later in Gandhism.'[22] The Gandhian programme of nonviolent resistance seemed to him radically different from mere passive resistance, the efficacy of which he began to question. The nonviolent ethic of Gandhi came very near to Rolland's concept of revolutionary action.

During the inter-war period in Europe from 1918 to 1938, Rolland was involved in the movement for social justice. His commitment was purely humanitarian, and he was at no time a member of any political party. He recognized the cause of the Soviet Union which he defended as an article of faith. But the Russia Rolland had in mind was mostly the Russia of Lenin and Gorki. In the later decade from 1928 to 1938, Rolland's political convictions created a stormy controversy in France as well as in Germany. He was more misunderstood than understood. The communist factions tried to disown the work of Romain Rolland while the right-wing parties bitterly criticized his political affiliation. Romain Rolland's controversy with the communist leader of France, Henri Barbusse, was notable for the crucial question of violence as a method of social revolution.

Rolland disputed the communist claim that violence was imperative for social transformation. He reminded Barbusse of the Gandhian experiment in India. Georges Connes, a friend of Rolland, observes on Rolland's argument with Barbusse: '. . . violence, the only possible means? No, Rolland retorted, there was also the Gandhi method of nonviolence, non-cooperation, passive resistance, ahimsa, call it what you like. Look at

22. W.T. Starr, *Romain Rolland and a World at War*, p. 82 (North Western University Press: Illinois) 1956.

what Gandhi had done for India by just crouching in jails and hunger-striking; the awakening he had brought to hundreds of millions.'[23] Rolland hoped the example of Gandhi might be convincing for those who continued to believe in violence for the righteous cause.

But this faith did not last long in Rolland himself. Though he held it in utmost respect, he began to doubt its applicability in a situation which was controlled by a totalitarian regime. As a personal ethic, embodying the cultivation of the highest virtue, the scope of nonviolence was still conceded by Rolland. What his acepticism did not permit was the feasibility of nonviolent action on a collective plane. He perceived a conflict between the actual and the ideal. Rolland moved away from his appreciation of the Gandhian techniques as the menace of Fascism and Nazism became grave enough to threaten the freedom of the whole world. When the vicious circle precipitated World War II, he found himself with the historic neeessity of supporting the violence of war. He came to this position by the dialectic of his inherent principles, chief of which are the dignity of the human personality, liberty of the individual and social justice.

The Fascist and Nazi tyranny threatened these concepts, and violated them to the extent that they might never be recovered. Rolland was moved by this unprecedented crisis, and he resolved to fight the enemies of humane values without any concession or compromise. When violence seemed to be the only way open for action, Rolland did not hesitate to sanction such violent action in the name of man. In this way Rolland was involved in a fatal dilemma between the nonviolent pacifism he sincerely believed in for long and the inevitable violence for the sake of a just cause. It was all the more tragic as Rolland, in his person, embodied nothing but nonviolence. His individual life ennobled the age-long ideals of compassion and charity. In the preface to to his political testament, *Above the Battle*, Rolland declared in 1915: 'For a year I have been rich in enemies. Let me say this

23. Georges Connes, *The Tragedy of Romain Rolland*, p. 147 (The University of Buffalo) 1948.

to them: they can hate me, but they will not teach me to hate.'[24] In the Gandhian way, Rolland could have added that he was born for love and not hatred.

Rolland's final attitude to nonviolence was stated by him when he contributed an article in honour of Gandhi on his seventieth birthday on 2 October 1939. He called it 'Homage from a man of the West to Gandhi'. Rolland wrote in his appreciation of Gandhi:

> To be applied to politics, the doctrine of nonviolence requires a very different moral climate from that which pervades the Europe of today; it demands a total, immense and unanimous sacrifice of self. . . . This faith in God is lacking in the majority of the men in the West, among the people as much as among the leaders. . . . In these circumstances, we cannot recommend the practice of Gandhi's doctrine, however much we may respect it.[25]

This estimate of Gandhi was made by Rolland just before World War II broke out. He foresaw the great catastrophe earlier, and tried his best to avert it. When the decision for war was taken by the Allies Rolland supported it, as he believed that this combat was a necessary evil for opposing a mightier wrong. Rolland made common cause in doing this with other eminent pacifists like Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell who similarly supported the war.

When the death of Romain Rolland at Vazelay in France on 30 December 1944 was reported to Gandhi, he was deeply moved. Recalling his great personality and life-work, Gandhi remarked: 'He truly lives in his many and nameless deeds. . . . He lived truth and nonviolence as he saw and believed them from time to sime.'[26]

Rolland and Gandhi belonged to the "panhumanist confrater-

24. Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle*, p. 18. (The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago) 1916.
25. S. Radhakrishnan (ed), *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work*. p. 257. (George Allen and Unwin, London) 1949.
26. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Vol. I, p. 105 (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad) 1956.

nity'. The choicest words Rolland used in homage to Gandhi can well be rendered by us in memory of both of them. 'We offer our fervent homage of love and veneration' to Gandhi and Rolland who realized 'in the heart and in action, our ideal of humanity to come'.

27. Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 247.

Gandhi's New Role in America

THEODORE OLSON

Until quite recently, Gandhi's friends in the United States prevented his achieving any relevance to the main problems of American society. Pacifists and liberal religionists, for different reasons, made it extremely difficult for serious Americans to understand what Gandhi might really be saying to America.

American pacifists maintained what was often a destructive relationship with Gandhian thought. As a small minority, they were placed psychologically in a position analogous to that of the foreign communist parties in the Stalin era. The demonstrated success of Bolshevism contrasted coercively with the minority status and political futility of the foreign parties, who therefore submitted quite willingly to Soviet dictation—almost always to their own detriment.

American pacifists tended for the same reasons to look on India as the pacifist 'homeland'. Gandhian concepts, Gandhian tactics, and even the esoterica of Gandhian garb and jargon were imported whole. Often they were turned into a ruling orthodoxy. Proposals that were pronounced 'not Gandhian' needed no further condemnation. The validity of given tactics too often was settled through exegesis of Gandhian texts. Action projects were described to the press as 'taking Gandhian action'—this in the land of the Boston Tea Party and the Quakers! Nonpacifist Americans thus saw Gandhianism as a cult phenomenon, as a dogma, and they naturally dismissed it as a source of political insight.

Liberal religionists played a part in the American misperception of Gandhi. As a group they had lost faith in the deep validity of their own religious heritage. And, not wishing to admit to irreligion, they transformed their scepticism into syncretism. In a manner utterly foreign to the basic bent of Christia-

nity and Judaism, they selected 'great teachers of the world's great religions' and constructed a religious quasi-authority by committee. To Westerners the most striking thing about Hinduism is its syncretism. And the most striking Hindu of all was Gandhi, syncretist *par excellence*.

Thus many Americans untouched by pacifist propaganda heard about Gandhi from the liberal religionists, who enjoyed a great vogue in America in the 'Twenties and Thirties'—long after their eclipse in Europe. These men, secretly hungry for an authority to replace the one they had repudiated, saw in Gandhi a fellow liberal religionist and a figure of recognized moral authority. So Americans in those years were presented with new pantheons, differing according to various prejudices, but always including the ancient Hebrew prophets, Jesus and Gandhi.

Thus Gandhi was given a stature by these men that he could not fundamentally sustain. His own priorities were reversed and he was portrayed as a saint and more than a saint (I have heard him prayed to by Americans) and who also was involved in a political struggle. This was both false to Gandhi and false to the American scene. Though Americans by and large are not guided by the Christian Church, they are also as a people not ready to admit the religio-political authority of one of their contemporaries. Gandhi's own efforts to break out of this strait-jacket had little effect on his American friends. The Gandhi of the campaigns and of liberal, 'progressive' religious thought was the only one allowed in America.

So it was that Americans of substance saw only an esoteric political dogmatist Gandhi through his pacifist friends and a religious pretender through his liberal religious friends. In these ways, the impact of a greater Gandhian insight was never felt in American life.

Professor Joan Bondurant performed the major feat of freeing Gandhi from his friends with the publication in 1958 of her *The Conquest of Violence*. Working as a political scientist, she examined the Gandhian campaigns for their political guidelines; how did the actions undertaken enlarge or restrict the processes of peaceful change? Writing at a time when the climate for

social change in the United States had been chilled for many years by the Cold War, she found several principles that could help Americans once again to undertake peaceful socio-economic change to achieve sorely-needed reforms. She avoided the importation of Indian goals and death almost exclusively with the means for improving *our own* social process, no matter what its ends. Obviously there are some ends, identified generally with political authoritarianism, that cannot be advanced by the principles she isolated; but it is precisely her achievement that she showed, in the context of native American political life, that our own social process could be enriched through the use of these principles. In a real sense, she introduced Gandhi to American main stream thinking.

But a good deal remains to be done. The American social process as a whole is now unfrozen, but social theory and social action have hardly begun to cope with the backed-up problems of our society. The thaw was not of course due to Gandhi or to Professor Bondurant. It was the result of a number of forces external and domestic, with pacifists and nuclear disarmers playing a probably significant part, but one impossible to assess quantitatively.

Now that it has come, the thaw has in fact exposed the near bankruptcy of socio-political theory in the United States. Technology, channelled if at all by only the most adventitious of restraints, is changing the entire face of the nation and its living patterns with almost complete autonomy and with dizzying speed. The cost is staggering, for up to forty per cent of the unit cost of every item of service can be assigned to waste somewhere along the production-distribution chain. Some of this figure is chargeable to the friction inevitable in an economy so large as America's, but the 'fat' waste in oney ear's gross national product would go a long way in aid for the industrialization of India.

If we judge by its past stability, the American standard political process is nearing a collapse. The party structure is re-forming; many interest groups are shifting their electoral allegiance; pressures are being felt from segments of the populace who have

never before been politically articulate; the influence of formerly powerful pressure groups is waning or being offset by new groups.

Yet all this is taking place without any clear idea of social goals. The ancient frames of reference are being strained out of shape by new problems. There is little understanding of the means by which this movement is to be focussed or made coherent. All this is due in great part to a fundamental fact of American political life; *politics in America has almost never been conceived as the means of orderly social change.*

It would take too long here to show the historic component of what is called the American Dream. This term denoted the 'vision' of social reality—the filter, if you will—through which Americans have viewed their own society. The most noteworthy feature of this Dream is that it has no place for the political process. Public affairs are conceived in the most minimal and static terms. It is over hundred years since this Dream even remotely corresponded to social reality in America, but its coercive effects are only now beginning to fade before the rush of the twentieth century. Thus the richest nation in the world lags behind every other industrialized Western society in terms of basic education, health services, utilization of capital for low-cost housing and mass transit and in care of the infirm and aged. To date it has not been possible to construct coherent social policies on these matters and to implement them—not because of disagreements about which plan to adopt, but because we have laboured under a consensus that such matters lay outside the realm of public affairs.

This means that, unless substantial changes in outlook occur, frustration and violence are programmed into the future. A prime source of this near-inevitability is that substantial body of opinion in the United States whose spokesmen are the right-wing Republicans and John Birchers. By denying most steadfastly that civil rights, housing, medical care, urban renewal and mass transit are matters with which political action must be concerned, by denying them a place in the mechanism of institutionalized change, these men are helping to insure that violence they

profess to fear in the rise of the dispossessed.

Left with no constitutional means of redress, these people have no choice but demonstrations in the streets. Once there, they are denounced as 'law-less' by these men of small vision. The grievance is not only reprcssed, it is denied a right to exist. If our authoritarian nihilists succeed in this repression, they will themselves be responsible for a subsequent outbreak of major violence on the part of the dispossessed.

A measure of our difficulty is that it is not only right-wing nihilsts of the Goldwater stripe who articulate this notion of non-politics. The idea that parliamentary procedure is the sole expression of democracy is widespread throughout America. Polls have established that half the American populace believes that street demostrations—uniformly nonviolent though they are—are subversive of 'the democratic process'.

The Congress historically has exemplified very well this negative vision of the purpose and scope of politics. Despite the majoritarian mystique under which our parties and Congress ostensibly operate, both parties and Congress are composed of a multitude of interest groups. These groups operate not as components of a coalition, but as *veto groups*. They exist in party or congress not to propose laws but to insure that nothing is done that is inimical to their own narrow interest. They operate negatively even in *ad hoc* alliances: I will oppose what you want opposed if you will oppose what I want opposed. The fact that party discipline is almost non-existent is not the cause but the reflection of the primacy of negative particularism. The system has functioned so long without a complete breakdown only because the country is so incredibly rich as to be able to afford this waste of lives and substance.

The most pressing problem for America therefore is how to enable long-needed changes to take place without violence; how to achieve both the methods and the understandings that will permit rapid soeial change both within and outside the bounds of parliamentary democracy as understood in America. The problem is complicated by the exitence of false answers and by public apathy towards a problem that seems too large for com-

prehension. As is always the case, the false answers participate to a large degree in the problem.

One answer that has taken deep root wherever Western technology and thought have penetrated is the rational secular state; functioning as a unified set of master plans 'for efficient production and distribution services', operated by a dedicated, centralized body of trained specialists aiming at The Total Good of Society. This vision derives much of its present power from a justified reaction against romantic negativism. But the romantic nihilists of the right are correct in their fears of this omni-competent state. Man may be too inefficient to achieve a 1984-style state, but the mere attempt to create the omni-competent state is itself a version of hell. Still, the attractiveness of this solution will grow the longer no alternatives are put forward to things as they are.

A second false answer is based on romantic proposals currently circulating through America for coalitions of the dispossessed. It is envisioned that the so-called 'New Deal coalition' of the early F.D. Roosevelt years be resurrected and that it express itself through control of Congress. This plan shares in the majoritarian illusion—the fifty-one-per-cent fallacy. It ignores the strength of particularists and localist infiuences in this society. And it assumes that such a coalitton could be stable. The brief history of the New Deal indicates the contrary.

It is unlikely that these false answers themselves will ever gain anything like the degree of internalization in the populace achieved by the obsolete American Dream. But apathy—the notion that there are no solutions—may enable these short-circuit answers to run their course. More likely however is that confusion and apathy will lead to violent reactions from the dispossessed, even reactions in the name of one or more of these answers, but doubly doomed on account of their blind, reactive violence.

The Federal government is at last beginning, if glacially, to move towards becoming a vehicle of change. Yet too often, standard bureaucratic solutions are imposed. The rhetoric of renewal covers only a routinized response that bogs down hope-

lessly when faced by the entrenched power interests of localism and particularism. In almost no case has a Federal or State program gone directly to the people and attempted to help them articulate their own latent power of self-help. But there is only so much the Federal government can do. (I use the term *government* in its American sense, as denoting the structure and means of Federal authority, not the occupants of office or their program.) The local and particularist influences in America are not just simply a problem at the Fedral level that must be overcome. They are the persisting and intractable reality of how our society is organized. No solutions are sound that must be based on stable Congressional majorities or on Federal programs.

The structural problem we face in our political process is *how to make these very particularist and localist influences into the vehicles of social change*. We have seen that at the national formal-political level, they are productive of great harm. At lower and informal levels of democratic life—and I shall be quite specific on this in a future article—they and they alone can originate and continue the drastic changes necessary to create political health in the United States.

It is here that Gandhian insights may have an important role to play. It will certainly not be a holistic 'Gandhian philosophy' that we take. That would, I think, be false to Gandhi himself as well as to our own heritage. Gandhi was both solidly rooted in his own culture and also thoroughly a pragmatist. He took insights from wherever he found them, using those that would work in his situuation and discarding the rest.

Nor will it be the Gandhi of handcraft culture who exhalted the village *panchayat*. For this we have our native 'soyabeans and sandals' set. And we have the decentralist Reichian romanticism of Paul Goodman.

It will not be the Gandhi of Hindu particularism either. These emphases served Gandhi's purposes well in their own setting, but by the nature of things are not transferable.

It will certainly not be a Gandhi that will aid us. Like pious Hasidic Jews, pacifists long looked for a native Messianic equivalent to Gandhi. But such is not to be the case. Our nearest

equivalents have been A.J. Must and Martine Luther King, and neither in fact is even an analogue. Not even among pacifists, to say nothing of the general public, would the younger generation submit to the *guru* principle. Only the naive expect to receive *darshan* from meeting even the most remarkable of our leaders.

It will not be any specific element of Gandhian thought or tactics or personality that will be most relevant to our desperate situation. It will rather be the example of how Gandhi worked —not the results of Gandhi's daring spiritual and tactical pragmatism, but that kind of pragmatism itself.

Part of that pragmatism is to aim one's efforts at the possible, to avoid comprehensive solutions, to concentrate on those places in society where change can be made, and to base those changes on the work of the people most intimately affected by the problem.

In bringing Gandhian pragmatism to bear on this problem, let me re-emphasize that the tradition of local initiative and particularism—so troublesome when ideologized—is likely to be a powerful help at the points where problems bite hardest.

The advocates of what is called in current social action discussion the 'triple revolution' have pointed out the crucial importance of a carry-over of strategy and tactics from the civil rights struggle into the problems of employment, education, automation and urban development. My own feeling is that the triple revolutionists—academics, labour figures and social actionists—have imposed on these problems a makeshift approach composed of the least stable elements of romanticism and Marxism.

The cultivation of a feeling of 'insurgency' in people is no substitute for an understanding of how the problem of action is actually perceived by the disadvantaged and dispossessed. It smacks of the autodidactic psychologism so favoured in middle class magazines. And there can be no automatic carry-over of vitality from the civil rights struggle into other areas. For the truth seems to be that, despite the pressing nature of our social problems, the people most affected have lost faith in their own ability and in the ability of available institutional structures to provide solutions. In important ways, even the civil rights move-

ment is subject to this lack of vision.

Nonviolent direct action—as carefully plotted and incisive as Gandhi's—has a special relevance here. The basic problems in mounting any sustained social action struggle are three: (1) The problem must be as personally pressing and unavoidable as the dark skin of the American Negro. (2) The disadvantaged must see some possibility of relative victory. (3) There is a certain 'critical mass'—a problem of numbers, below which the struggle is not seen as a group effort, but as the activities of individual marginal people.

Direct action can help on all three points, when freed from pacifistic or other ideological frameworks, when tied firmly to American cultural historical values, and when directed at the soluble minutiae of community disturbance or defeat. Direct action can cut through apathy by its tactical applicability to bite-size problems: it can demonstrate its own utility as a social tool for achieving conerete ends. In so doing it can help recruit the 'critical mass' for larger efforts. When this is achieved it becomes possible to keep the grievance inescapably before the eyes of the general populace until they too, in one way or another, must act.

In all this we must remember the style of Gandhi, who was unwilling to posit grandiose goals for a given action. He was often ignorant of what the next step would be until he had carried through the present effort. He was not 'attached' to his goal. Gandhi was also aware in practice that, despite its derivations, nonviolent direct action was not more 'spiritual' than other forms of social action, all of which strive for and with the spirits of men. He knew in any case that men are both less and more than spirit. His knowledge of men was such that he knew he must combine nonviolent action with other forms of work in order truly to win a campaign. And his confidence in nonviolence was such that he let it prove itself strong precisely in combination with the most flexible politics and other forms of action provided by Indian culture. If we can do as much in the United States, we shall have freed Gandhi from his friends and enabled him to be the friend of all Americans.

The Moral Philosophy of Gandhi

IJA LAZ PAWLOWSKA

Gandhi had not expounded his moral precepts systematically. Neither was he always consistent in his injunctions. He was, above all, a man of action and a reformer rather than a thinker or moral philosopher, creator of a system of ethics. His moral sense suffered acutely from the situation he had found in the world; it was in his desire to change it that he promulgated a great number of precepts, scattered all over his works. My attempts at a systematical arrangement of these precepts has resulted in a discovery of three main moral tendencies to which, in spite of some wavering and fluctuation of his attitudes, he remained faithful. Two of these tendencies, expressing his reaction to the wrongs suffered by humanity, are reflected in the principle of ahimsa (nonviolence) proclaimed by him, and in the principle of equality (equalitarian justice). By promulgating them Gandhi intended to regulate human relationships. The third tendency, expressed in the principle of asceticism, constitutes a separate current in his ethics and represents his perfectionist aspirations. Gandhi believed that the path to perfection leads through a life of asceticism, through systematic self-denial of the so-called 'pleasures of the body'.

Gandhi promulgated ahimsa as a principle of universal nonviolence, 'all-embracing love', which includes love of animals as well as that of human beings. The practice of carrying out this kind of principle leads to unavoidable conflicts, since acting for the benefit of certain beings often involves an injury to others; the defence of one life may destroy another life. Gandhi was fully conscious of the respective needs of the human and animal worlds being mutually at variance as a result of certain laws of nature and for that reason he would not support the idea, popular in India (especially voiced by the Jains) that

nobody is ever allowed to destroy the life of any living creature; he formulated his directions in a minimalist spirit, by enjoining people not to injure animals more than is strictly indispensable for man's biological survival, for his self-defence in the face of death, hunger or illness. Yet, within the human relationships, he demanded the full realization of ahimsa. He believed in the possibility of arranging the mutual relations among people in such a way as to avoid their harming one another.

Gandhi's comprehensive principle of ahimsa with regard to human beings includes, according to Gandhi, three main, concrete principles: (1) the principle of defence against injury, (2) the principle of love towards one's adversary, and (3) the principle of fighting without violence. The opinion that Gandhi was a man who apparently assumed non-resistance to evil is wrong. He was actually a fighter who would not allow the tolerance of any injuries to oneself and still less to others. He demanded an active attitude and although he desired people to forget such means of fight as man-slaughter or bodily injury, he was sometimes inclined to consider a passive tolerance of wrongs to be a still greater evil than dealing with them by violence. He required fight but at the same time he commanded people to desist from any feelings of hate against the opponent. He wished to treat an enemy as a potential ally. He would not allow slander of the adversary at the time of fight or humiliating him in case of victory. Neither would he admit of any retaliation.

Gandhi owes his world-wide celebrity to his idea which came to be termed 'passive resistance' and which he himself would rather call 'nonviolence'. The term 'violence', perhaps the most important in his ethics, has not been either clearly defined or used consistently by him so as to enable us to decide in every concrete case of behaviour if Gandhi would count it as violence or not. By prohibition of violence in methods of struggle he usually meant the proscription of manslaughter and bodily injury. Among the recommended 'nonviolent' methods, he includes mass action, strikes, demonstration marches, non-compliance with orders etc. However, he had also used the term 'violence' in a wider sense, assigning it not only to actions

which he considered morally objectionable, such as deceit, slander, lies, terror, but also occasionally counting as violence an unfriendly attitude, dislike and hate. Thus the range of this idea becomes wider and certainly also more vague. It should be however, conceded that the term 'violence' in this wider sense has its equivalent in the idea of 'cold war' whose meaning seems to include mainly these elements which served to enlarge the conception of violence.

When Gandhi enjoined unexceptionable observance of ahimsa in social intercourse, as the simultaneous observance of all the principles comprised in its range of meaning, he made no allowance for their conflicting character. He was unable to admit of a conception of reality allowing for situations, in which even a man with the best of intentions may be compelled to give up his noble purpose or accept an act of violence as a necessary evil. He believed that the laws governing the world cannot be as cruel as that. In his general, abstract speculations the conflict between effective help to people in danger and the avoidance of violence is treated as a difficulty which can always be overcome in a morally satisfactory way.

With this view of the world to which he adhered, complications necessarily arose whenever a need occurred of dealing with a concrete problem. When asked what was the duty of a son whose father had been assaulted by a madman with a hatchet, Gandhi replied that the son should defend his father even if he were to kill the assailant. He admitted of similar behaviour only in extreme emergency, but nevertheless he did admit it in concrete situations, not only in case of individual behaviour but also sometimes—though even less willingly—in collective behaviour. (Hence his wavering attitude to a war for defence.) He was then faithful to his principle of defence but he betrayed the principle of nonviolence. However, this manner of solving a moral dilemma was far from satisfactory to him and he did not keep to it consistently; at times he declared that it is better to die than cause someone's death, and demanded the observance of ahimsa as a principle of nonviolence 'at any price', whatever the sacrifices it may involve. And since he assumed, in keeping with Indian

tradition, that a behaviour that is morally right cannot result in a wrong, he tried to argue in situations of this kind that the loss of any goods valued in life, including the loss of life itself, is not a real loss since only he who loses moral value is the true loser. It was in one's perseverance with noble feelings that Gandhi saw a true victory, even if one should become otherwise defeated. Thus by 'victory' he does not mean what is commonly understood by this name, i.e. gaining the ends for which the struggle was fought, such as winning independence, repelling aggression, introducing social reforms etc. What he means is moral victory.

Gandhi not only sympathized with the wronged but often his sense of justice revolted when a wrong was inflicted. He was a representative of equalitarian tendencies. The principle of equality, promulgated by him, which was sometimes criticized for its vagueness and utopian character, had in this intention a general, humanitarian sense. When he claimed that 'a man is man's equal' and requested the abolition of the division of people into 'higher and lower orders', he intended to defend the under-privileged and to improve their condition.

He promulgated the principle of economic equality by which he understood the abolition of excessive disparities in the financial status of various social groups. The principle of equality was confirmed in Gandhi's practice by his endeavours to introduce various social reforms with a view to a rearrangement of social relations conducive to abolishing all discrimination of people: racial, national, caste, religious or professonal discrimination. He fought for equal rights for women. His greatest concern was for the status of the so-called untouchables in India, those standing on the lowest step of the caste ladder, the pariah, and in this field his achievement is said to be the greatest.

Gandhi preached asceticism in life. Ascetic practice has been found in various cultures but nowhere to such an extent as in India. Three ascetic principles are recurring in Indian tradition and these were observed by Gandhi himself and included by him in the set of rules binding on the members of the ideological movement which he had founded. They are: moderation in the use

of food, temperance in sexual life, and poverty. His attitude with regard to all the three above rules was ascetic in the extreme. Certain elements of asceticism can also be found in his opinions on other subjects, *e.g.* in his taking an unfavourable attitude towards art and in his hostility to various devices making life easy or pleasant (especially his hostility towards industrial achievements).

The distinctive feature of asceticism is the deliberate self-imposing of abstinences. It does not follow, however, that every single case of self-suppression implies ascetic practice. To refer to this kind of practice seems legitimate only when self-restraint is connected with a definite kind of motivation, viz. that of perfectionism.

In some of Gandhi's injunctions the motivation is complex. For instance, when he ordered the maximum of moderation in the use of food during the periods of starvation he was doing it out of his concern for others. He declared: 'When millions are threatened by starving to death nobody is in the right to eat more than necessary for keeping his body in health and fitness'. But only to read his Autobiography is sufficient to see beyond any doubt that even if people were to possess unlimited stores of food, Gandhi would not fail to preach his idea of not gratifying the desires of the palate. For in his opinion a perfect man does not seek their statisfaction but finds 'true happiness' in fighting them down. Gandhi contended that 'crucifying the body' is necessary for moral growth and that 'the soul grows in strength in direct correspondence with the curbing of the body'.

Gandhi believed in the moral value of actions undertaken with an effort and contrary to our inclinations. He often insisted that what is good must be hard to achieve, and must involve suffering. He also believed in the reverse: whatever voluntary suffering and is being achieved with an effort must be good.

Gandhi's moral injunctions constitute a set of rules of conflicting character. For one concrete situation quite often two of his rules might be applied, one of which only can be realized. This is not a specific quality of his system of ethics, for, according

to a seemingly just remark of John Stuart Mill, 'there exists no moral system under which there do not arise unequivocal cases of conflicting obligations. These are the real difficulties, the knotty points both in the theory of ethics, and in the conscientious guidance of personal conduct.'

Two rules may be called conflicting if a situation arises in which acting in accordance with one of them means acting against the other. Out of conflicting rules and an empirical statement of the occurrence of this kind of situation, a pair of contradictory rules will result. For instance, in our dealings with a person suffering from mortal disease the contradictory rules would result from simultaneous application of both, the principle of truthfulness and the prlnciple of sparing unnecessary suffering.

Whether any two rules are conflicting or not can be decided empirically, but their contradictory character is to be ascertained by analysis, two rules being contradictory when only from their sense it follows that they cannot be simultaneously realized.

Moral philosophers have tried to overcome in various ways the conflicting character of rules: (1) they set down the conditions under which the rules are binding, in a more particular way (e.g. they exclude the case of mortal disease from the principle of truthfulness); (2) they introduce a hiearchy of rules (e.g. the principle of sparing a person's suffering has been considered to be of greater importance than the principle of truthfulness), (3) they introduce certain auxiliary principles which serve as guide lines in resolving the conflict (this part was played in Gandhi's work by the principle of the choice of the lesser evil). All those attempts restrict the number of cases in which out of a given system of non-contradictory principal rules, the contradictory derivative rules are deduced; but they fail fully to eliminate them.

A charge had been brought against Gandhi that his actions were not in accordance with his principles. Those who expressed this opinion were mostly doing so—if they kept consistently to immanent criticism—probably because in Gandhi's place and accepting the same general directions they would solve the conflict in a different way, their own preferences taking a dif-

ferent course. This may explain, for example, the fact that some people had denounced Gandhi for his decision to destroy the animals which were devastating the crops in his ashram, against his principle of 'unity and sanctity of all life', while others blamed him because against his principle of fighting down the starvation of people he proceeded to set up shelters for old cows which bore heavily on the people. And yet these ways of solving the conflict fell within the range of his ethical system.

However, none of these solutions has helped to overcome the conflicting character of certain points in Gandhi's ethics and for that reason he had, in certain situations admitted as equally good both of the two competing possibilities. Whatever the moralists' estimate of the fact might be, the ethical systems do not supply an unequivocal choice of decision in all situations.

We find in Gandhi's works a number of utterances intended as justification and defence of his rules and he recurs—as other moralists do—to a variety of arguments. Three main threads of argument can be traced here, two of which I have called justification as opposed to the third one which I propose to term moral persuasion.

When the justification of rules is being discussed as a process analogical to that of proving a statement, it is usually pointed out that this procedure is carried out immanently, within the framework of a given ethical system; and the structure of an ethical system is deductive. When justifying a rule of the lower level one tends to prove that its validity has to be acknowledged since certain rules from the higher level had been accepted and certain propositions admitted. The rule about to be justified is connected with the rule justifying it by the relation of consequence. For instance, Gandhi justified his principle of non-humiliation of the adversary by referring it to the rule 'one should tend to abolish conflicts' and to the proposition 'humiliating the adversary makes the conflict more acute'. The process of justification thus conceived is concluded with a final reference to some moral axiom. By 'moral axiom' I mean a principle which is the logical reason for a series of rules constituting a set of its consequences, without being itself a logical

consequence of any other principle within the range of the system. The moral axiom is connected with the derivative rules by the relation of logical consequence. To the above manner of justification, which I have called immanent justification, I have opposed transcendent justification. When informed of the moral axiom people usually insist on being informed of further justifying reasons. They ask why they are to behave in the exact way pointed out by the principal rule and moral philosophers often feel it their duty to answer this question. And then we may witness a search for reasons outside the system.

Naturally they are not moral reasons since a final moral reason is the moral axiom of a given ethical system; however, it may happen that people refer to some different, non-moral values, pointing out that fulfilment of the moral dictates is an indispensable condition or at least a favourable circumstance for the achievement of the other values. For instance, Gandhi had argued in favour of asceticism by pointing out that it is an indispensable condition of good health. If keeping in good health is to be treated as a non-moral value, we are dealing here with transcendent justification.

To the two ways singled out above I am opposing a different manner of vindication of rules also applied by Gandhi, which can be called persuasion. When answering the question, 'Why should one behave in the way imposed by a given system of ethics?' the moralists often say that it is the matter of human dignity, or that true happiness lies that way, or that it is the only way of achieving true humanity, or because it is beautiful, or wise. Proceeding in this manner a moralist is just taking hold of some evaluating term or of a term of descriptive contents but possessing emotive value. For example, when Gandhi was recommending the peaceful solution of the conflict between the Hindu and the Moslem, he contended that practising ahimsa is the only way of finding Truth. Another time he vindicated the principle of ahimsa by arguing that its observance had been ordered by God. He also said that vengeance is not right because it is beneath human dignity and against human nature. This kind of argument is sheer propaganda. It is the expression

of the tendency to reinforce the psychological status of precepts, to endow them with greater validity. By references to God, laws of Nature or Truth, Gandhi was undoubtedly reinforcing the status of his rules among people for whom the terms 'God', 'Nature' or 'Truth' imply a positive emotional connotation and who are, moreover, inclined to recognize the existence of a connection between the accepted metaphysical propositions and the promulgated ethical system.

In my opinion a strenuous campaign for the sake of propagating definite values is not, itself, an activity which might give rise to a legitimate pretext, intellectual or moral. A moralist wants to make people adopt the values that he appreciates, he wants to shape attitudes and it is obvious that in order to achieve it he will avail himself not only of the informative but also of the impressive function of the language.

Gandhi's recurrence to the so-called 'persuasive definitions' is also a kind of persuasion. It is achieved by the use of words whose meaning is both descriptive and strongly emotive, such as 'happiness', 'culture', 'justice'. The range of these words is vague and their various meanings differ subtly. A persuasive definition consists in making these words precise by an adaptation of their meaning to a chosen principle and leaving unchanged the appurtenant emotional brand, positive or negative. The word defined is then frequently supplied with the adjective 'truth'. It was in this way that Gandhi used to adapt the meaning of words to his own purposes of propaganda, putting forth his own principles under the cover of slogans, well known and universally accepted by the masses, and frequently supplying those words with the attribute 'true'. He used such expressions as 'true Hinduism', 'true civilisation', 'true art', 'a true poet', 'true happiness', 'a true victory' etc. An instance of a particularly flagrant change, for purposes of persuasion, of the usual sense of a word, is found in Gandhi's reply to the question whether he appreciated music and if he would wish it given to the world. In reply, sounding rather like a joke, he said: 'If we mean by music union, concord, mutual help, it may be said that in no department of life can we dispense with it'.

Gandhi passed for a man who had offered to the world something quite new in the field of morality. Is this opinion right? In what does Gandhi's originality as a moralist consist? I think that one should look for it not in the contents of particular rules constituting his moral program but, above all, in the context of the actual situation in which he was promulgating and realizing them, as well as in the postulated range of their validity.

Gandhi was the first to promulgate and realize the principle of ahimsa while acting in the capacity of a leader of a nation fighting for freedom. The ideas of nonviolence, ahimsa, or fellow-feeling had been advocated as a universal moral obligation in various cultures, long before his appearance; however they were represented by people who remained outside the sphere of politics, or anyhow had never acted as political leaders. For it was firmly believed that the defence of one's national interests is unavoidably connected with the necessity of departure from those principles. Whoever wanted to put them in practice, he should restrict his activity to the fields in which he would be only acting in his own name and on his own behalf. No one before Gandhi had dared to act on the same principles as an active politician, guarding the interests of his country, and especially as a leader of a country fighting for freedom.

Gandhi was the first to oppose the duplicity of moral attitudes not only within the sphere of principles but also in the field of his own political practice. He transferred, without any alterations or limitations, the rules appreciated in individual relations into the sphere of group-relations. This constitutes, in my belief, the most differentiating quality of Gandhi's achievement as a moralist.

Gandhi was such a complex and heterogeneous personality that those who want to size him up in terms of a total estimate, are faced with difficulties. In some respects he seems familiar to them, in others a stranger. Quite frequently he seems emotionally engaging and yet provokes intellectual objections. People of an anti-metaphysical turn of mind are shocked by the religious and metaphysical foundations underlying his moral injunctions: but on the other hand it would be hard to deny that in India it was

precisely this kind of man who had the best chance of influencing the masses and inculcating upon them new ideas—a man who spoke, as he did, a language abounding in references to tradition and popular beliefs. Intellectual objections are also awakened by his insistence on various pseudo-empirical statements such as that 'the good is always finally victorious', 'a suffering willingly self-imposed is never wasted', 'celibacy is conducive to particularly good health' etc.—his insistence on propositions which are an obvious product of wishful thinking. It was wishful thinking which also made him occasionally reject a priori those models of social life which he felt to be cruel and which would not fit into his optimistic conception of the world. Here belongs, among others, the theory of class struggle; he referred to it reluctantly, saying that the very term is in itself loaded with conflict.

Those who see the value of moral principles in their function of regulating social relations and who connect moral perfection with a capacity for noble conduct towards other people, will be inclined to consider all the sphere of Gandhi's asceticism, all his meticulous suppression of 'bodily passions' for the sake of achieving a quite differently conceived perfection, a pointless complication of one's life. However, if they wish to denounce Gandhi for futile waste of energy spent on fighting down the 'temptations of flesh', they will be recalled to the fact that he had had incomparably more energy left than other people for his public activity and his service to others. Whoever would wish totally to deny Gandhi certain values by virtue of certain facts would be obliged by virtue of other facts to grant him the self-same values—and to a greater extent. No wonder that Jawaharlal Nehru who had been, in Gandhi's lifetime, his eager polemist and perhaps still more eager defender, sometimes described him by contradictory qualities. People of different cultures, different outlooks and various intellectual levels had called Gandhi a great man and had the greatest regard for him; for his numerous eccentricities and irrationalities have been overshadowed by his goodness. He was a good man.

Gandhi's Concept of Unilateral Disarmament

RAJENDRA PRASAD

The world is passing through a crucial phase in its history. Science and technology have made such tremendous progress that they have made it possible for mankind to live in comfort and free from poverty and disease if only man knew how to utilise the opportunities offered to him and use them not for the purpose of exploitation or destruction but for the benefit of humanity at large. On the other hand, this advance in science and technology has created a situation which may well lead to the destruction of civilization and the annihilation of mankind, should man be foolish and short-sighted enough to abuse and misuse the opportunities and advantages which science and technology have to offer.

It is only necessary to realise the danger involved in the nuclear race to rouse the conscience of mankind and check this mad competition. If it were only a question affecting two combatants, who could fight it out between themselves and destroy each other, one could sit back complacently and say: 'If they are so minded let them do their worst to each other and be damned.' But unfortunately much more is at stake. It is the future of humanity. Combatants or opposing nations are as much involved in it as non-combatants and neutrals. The slaughter of the innocent and the guilty alike on a mass scale is bad enough. It becomes infinitely worse if not only the living but also many generations of those yet to be born are doomed to be afflicted with congenital physical and mental defects. The non-aligned and neutral people are as much involved in this as those who are knowingly engaged in the criminal conspiracy of creating weapons and conditions that would spell their own annihi-

lation no less than that of others.

There is no known defence against a nuclear attack once it is launched. The only thing that the target country can do is to perfect a system of instant retaliation that would be able to function even when the rest of the country has been reduced to an atomic wreckage. It can however be poor consolation to the victim of a nuclear attack to know that after he has been wiped out of existence a similar fate would overtake the adversary.

It has further been said that the only way to prevent a nuclear war is to develop an adequate nuclear deterrent. To buttress this argument it is pointed out that it was only the knowledge that if they used poison gas the Allied nations would not hesitate to retaliate in kind, which prevented the Axis Powers from employing poison gas in the last World War.

Even if deterrence suceeeds, the mounting scale of expenditure on armaments resulting from the nuclear arms race will be such as to impoverish the nations concerned and deprive mankind of much of the fruits of scientific advance. According to a report sponsored by the National Planning Association of America, produced by men who were not concerned in any anti-nuclear campaign, the United States was in 1958 'spending 45 billion dollars per annum on military preparation. In the United States about 10 per cent of the gross national product is now devoted to military purposes. It is estimated that 15 per cent of the gross national product of the Soviet Union is similarly devoted. If the world goes on as it is, neither better nor worse, it is estimated that from the present time till 1970, from 1,500 to 2,000 billion dollars will have been spent on armaments but this will certainly prove to be an underestimate, since new inventions will necessitate increasingly expensive weapons.'

A race for nuclear weapons of which the nuclear tests are an index, if it remains unchecked, can thus have only three possible results:

(1) It may lead to thermo-nuclear war between East and West which will result in the annihilation of whole populations on either side, destroy civilization and turn the world into a radio-active wasteland.

(2) Or, as Bertrand Russell points out, assaults on heavenly bodies by the competing powers may take the place of exploding nuclear weapons in the attempt by each to demonstrate its superior counterforce capacity to the other side. 'It may well happen', says Bertrand Russell, 'that means will be found to cause them [the terrestrial bodies] to disintegrate. The moon may split and crumble and melt. Poisonous fragments may fall on Moscow and Washington or more innocent regions. Hate and destructiveness having become cosmic will spread madness beyond its present terrestrial confines.'

(3) The insane race for supremacy in thermo-nuclear weapons may lead to the financial bankruptcy of the countries concerned and turn the whole world into a vast slum inhabited by fear-ridden neurotics, like the philosophers of Laputa in Dean Swift's satire.

How is it, one may ask, that with all these disastrous consequences of nuclear warfare staring them in the face, the powers still engage in the nuclear arms race? Why cannot they agree to stop the ruinous competition and dump their armaments into the sea, or where their capacity for damage is destroyed? The reason is that both sides are in the grip of mutual fear, suspicion and distrust, and these do not make for sanity. The only cure for fear, Mahatma Gandhi taught us, is faith; for suspicion sincerity; and for distrust trust.

We have seen disarmament conferences dragging on their weary course endlessly only to bog down in a morass of equivocation and double talk. Diplomats hold forth on disarmament but are not prepared to abjure war. They talk about peace but have a mental reservation about the renunciation of force.

The straightest and the simplest way to break through this vicious circle would be for all powers to abjure the use of force altogether, and this must be reflected in their domestic policies. There may be an agreement to enforce collective sanctions, economic and other, not involving the use of force, against any power that violates the agreed code.

In the alternative if any one country taking courage in both hands unilaterally disarmed, it would break this vicious circle of

mutual fear and distrust and pave the way for universal disarmament. Such a nation would go down in history as the benefactor of mankind and the world will not allow it to fall a victim to aggression. Mankind has advanced in thought. The conscience of the world has been awakened. We have of late witnessed one African country after another achieve independence, not by the use of military force but under pressure of world opinion. It will, however, be said that charity should begin at home. India has had the unique privilege of engaging in a successful nonviolent struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. She should set the example if her appeal for unilateral disarmament is to carry any weight. I consider this to be a perfectly legitimate challenge. My appeal is addressed to India no less than to the other countries of the world.

It may be, however, that some other country is better qualified than India to take the lead in this respect and will succeed quicker than we. Mahatma Gandhi was once asked that if he, after fifty years of striving, had not been able on his own admission to demonstrate the full power of the nonviolence of his conception, what chance was there for others to succeed even in a thousand years? He replied: 'It may take some a thousand years, and it may take others only one year. Do not think that, if in spite of my fifty years' practice of it I am still imperfect, it must take you many more years. No, there is no rule of three here. You may succeed quicker than I.'

He even envisaged some Western nation, by dint of its training in discipline and organisation, and its martial valour, attaining the goal of nonviolence even before India, though he never ceased to hope that India would not allow itself to be beaten in the race.

Nuclear weapons far from ensuring the triumph of one way of life or the other only promise the extinction of all life. On the other hand, instances can be multiplied to show that military defeat, occupation and annexation of a country did not result in the disappearance of the nation or its way of life: witness Poland, Ireland, Czechoslovakia, to mention only a few. During the last world war resistance movements sprang up in

several countries under German occupation. The victims of Nazi aggression realised that capitulation by the forces of their respective Governments did not necessarily mean the end of popular resistance to occupation. It was further noted that these movements were most successful where they were carried on, largely if not wholly, by moral, i.e. nonviolent, means. An outstanding instance of this is provided by the resistance movement in Norway. Violent resistance, where it was tried, proved efficacious only to the extent to which it was the reflection of moral resistance, or the measure of the will to resist in terms of readiness to suffer, and of the intensity of sympathy and active or passive support of the thousands of non-terrorists.

The employment of nuclear weapons is only part of the technique of frightfulness. The idea behind it is that if the tyrant can demonstrate his undoubted capacity to exterminate the adversary, the latter is bound to submit. But if the adversary learns the art of dying without submission or a sense of defeat, if he develops the awareness that there is in us something which the armaments cannot destroy and which survives even the destruction of our physical body, the power of armaments, nuclear or other, will be sterilised. For it is not the physical destruction of the adversary the tyrant desires as a rule, but only to bend him to his will. 'At the back of the policy of terrorism', observed Mahatma Gandhi, 'is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tryant a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit.'

This was what happened in our own case. The British could have tried to put us down in 1930 by methods which they adopted in 1857 to suppress the Indian Revolt. But we did not give them the chance, because we were, by and large, nonviolent: and even though our nonviolence was not of the purest type, it worked. Lord Irwin had to declare that his Government could

not impose 'the peace of the grave' on India even though they had the capacity.

Being asked whether the atom bomb had not rendered obsolete the weapon of nonviolence, Gandhi answered: 'No'. On the contrary nonviolence was the only thing that was now left in the field, he said. 'It is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy. I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself, "Unless now the world adopts nonviolence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind".'

To provide the antidote to the atom bomb, however, requires nonviolence of the highest type. It may be asked whether this would not make too heavy a demand on human nature. Answering this question Gandhi said: 'The critics gratuitously assume the impossibility of human nature, as it is constituted, responding to the strain involved in nonviolent preparation. But that is begging the question. I say, "You have never tried the method on any scale. In so far as it has been tried, it has shown promising results." '

After all, the change in our outlook and way of life demanded by Gandhi, by adopting nonviolence or ahimsa is not more drastic than that resulting from our going in the opposite direction. It only requires foresight, faith and determination to leave the trodden path and chalk out a new one which would be for the benefit not only of the present generation but also countless generations to come. If we feel ourselves unable to undertake and achieve this at one step, let us at least make a move in the right direction by banning all the nuclear tests as a preliminary step towards the removal of the threat to human survival that confronts us today, and thus give humanity breathing time to think out and adopt further steps to rid the world of fear, distrust and suspicion which lie at the root of violence.

The Gandhian Contribution to Education

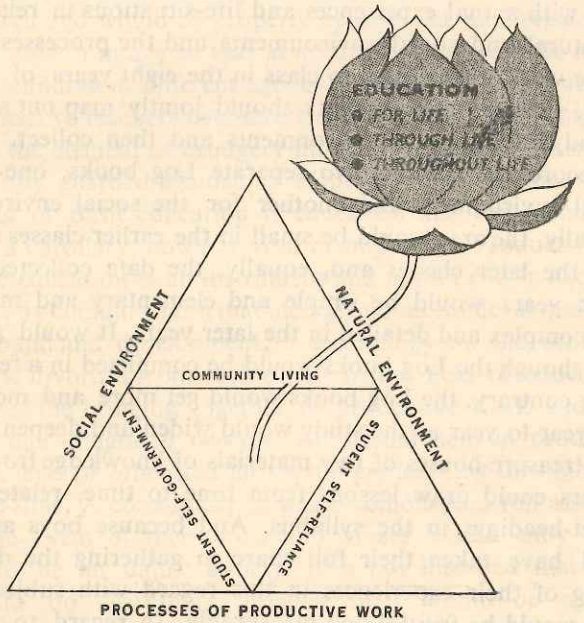
G. RAMACHANDRAN

Gandhi looked at life as a whole and as a unity and on education as the only revolutionary instrument of lifting life continually to something better, richer and fuller, materially, culturally, morally and spiritually. Nearly twenty years ago he deliberately gave his educational program the name 'Nai Talim', meaning New Education. Under Nai Talim, education became life-centred, instead of text-book-centred and Nai Talim was defined as education for life, through life and throughout life. Nai Talim became divided into Pre-basic, Basic, post-Basic, University and Social education. Pre-Basic was the Nursery school part, Basic was elementary education for a period of eight years, between 7 and 15 years of age, Post-Basic was High school education, and Social education became adult education in the widest and most relevant sense.

Gandhi first took up Basic education for boys and girls between 7 and 15 years of age, i.e., for a period of eight years. This, according to him, was the birthright of every child in India and no child could remain without it if Indian humanity was to move forward. When Basic education came into the picture and grew, it explored downwards into Pre-Basic education or education of children from 2 to 17 years of age and upwards into Post-Basic education or education of boys and girls from 15 to 18 years of age. University education came after Post-Basic education. Social or Adult education and Basic education were kept close together from the very beginning because the elementary education of boys and girls and that of parents were intimately related to each other; one could not succeed without the other.

The overall plan of Basic education may be represented in

the form of a symbol (see figure). The outer triangle will indicate that teachers and students working and learning together should derive lessons from the natural and social environments and also woven round the processes of productive work. The catchment area of learning will thus consist of the natural and social environments and the processes of productive work. The processes of productive work will thus constitute only onethird of the catchment area. The inner, inverted triangle will indicate that teachers and students would build up cooperatively an integrated school community, sharing in turn in all community work, developing self-reliance and a measure of self-sufficiency; and all this to be based on the self-government of the students, under which the school Assembly would elect a Cabinet of Student-Ministers for planning and carrying out community work inside and outside the school and self-assessing achievements and failures.



THE SYMBOLISM OF BASIC EDUCATION

This symbolism leads straight into the heart of the Gandhian concept of education, which aims at the development of all the faculties latent in boys and girls and the all-round growth of their personality, both as individual human beings and as partakers in building a just, peaceful and progressive society. Gandhi had once poetically said that he wanted not only thinking brains but thinking fingers. He put all his reasoning against the common divorce between learning and working. He wanted work to vitalise learning and learning to vitalise work. He, therefore, sometimes referred to Basic education as education in and through work. The traditional Indian educational system of the last hundred years or so typified such a divorce and Gandhi, like Rabindranath Tagore, was a constant rebel against it.

A practical question concerns the manner in which the learning of the subject-contents of the Basic school syllabus is to be linked with actual experiences and life-situations in relation to the natural and social environments and the processes of productive work. From class to class in the eight years of a Basic school, teachers and students should jointly map out areas for the study of both the environments and then collect, arrange and record the data in two separate Log books, one for the natural environment and another for the social environment. Naturally, the area would be small in the earlier classes and bigger in the later classes and, equally, the data collected in the earlier years would be simple and elementary and more and more complex and detailed in the later years. It would also not be as though the Log books would be completed in a few years; on the contrary, the Log books would get more and more data from year to year as the study would widen and deepen and become treasure-houses of raw materials of knowledge from which teachers could draw lessons from time to time, related to the subject-headings in the syllabus. And because boys and girls would have taken their full share in gathering the data, the linking of their experiences in this regard with subjects to be learnt would be fruitful and pleasurable. In regard to weaving lessons around the processes of productive work, this would be

done by keeping careful records of the work done from day to day as also of the discussions in regard to every question of 'how' and 'why' which arise in the course of the discussions. This would be the third treasure-house of data open to teachers and students for linking experience with the subject-headings in the syllabus.

The distinction between play and work is well defined in Basic education. Work and play cannot be alternatives. Play for boys and girls above seven years of age would be in addition to work, and not in place of it as in the earlier year at the Nursery school level. Play has a place in the Basic school, but only in addition to work. Work becomes drudgery only if it is simply mechanical and done beyond the capacity of the children concerned. On the other hand, when learning is interwoven with work it satisfies mental demands and thus becomes exciting and joyful. Moreover, work would be extremely simple for the smaller children and would be properly spaced out and regulated with their growth in age so that at no time would work be more than what children at different age-levels could do. It is true that unimaginative teachers over-stressing productive work might introduce the element of drudgery into a Basic school. This has to be carefully guarded against by emphasising every time that the object of Basic education is education and that production is only a corollary, however vital or important. Productive work in Basic education is an instrument and not an end in itself.

It was Gandhi's faith that mental and moral development on the one hand and development of technology on the other should not be divorced from each other. In the field of education this implies the bringing together of productive work and learning into one integrated process. All should help in production at some level or other and all should get learning through it at the same time. A community in which some would toil and produce in the sweat of their brow and others would only consume, would be an unjust society. It is not intended that everyone should do everything, because there would be appropriate arrangements for the division of work. To create a sarvodaya society as envisaged by Gandhi, boys and girls should grow up

acquiring as much of learning as possible in and through productive work. They would thus not turn away from productive work and at the same time become educated. If this integration of learning and working is not achieved in the lives of boys and girls in schools, it can be achieved later only through compulsion and coercion, which would damage their minds.

Gandhi had, at a very early stage, been attracted to Tolstoy's philosophy of bread-labour. In his earlier educational experiments he had probably over-stressed productive work and understressed intellectual development and these two had been kept as separate processes. Later he discovered the flaw and gave equal emphasis to both and put them together into one integrated process of learning through work and working for learning.

Is it possible to avoid text books altogether in Basic schools? It is one thing to say that elementary education during the first eight years ought not to be wholly text-book-centred and another thing altogether to say that books can be given up completely. Books would certainly be necessary. There should be plenty of reading books for boys and girls and reference books for teachers. What must be avoided is pinning the minds of boys and girls to text books, leading to cramming and memorising. Even memorising will be necessary, but it should not be forced through the text-book system. Education is more than memorising and concentrating on specific lessons in text books. Perhaps it might also be possible to produce a new type of text books which could take the place of present ones and which, without pinning down the minds of boys and girls only to specific lessons, may through the method of suggestion rouse their intellectual curiosity to learn much more than what is in the book. Basic education does not rule out books, but it is certainly against making elementary education text-book-centred. In one sense what is objectionable is not the use of text books, but the misuse of text books. Progressive education everywhere has brought about a change in the traditional role of teachers. The teacher is not a person who just teaches, but one who assists children to learn.

It should be kept in mind that productive work as an instru-

ment of learning is imperative in Basic education. If productive work is to yield knowledge under various heads, then such work has to be planned, regulated, executed and assessed as educational projects of work. Planning and regulating productive work, from very simple beginnings onwards, has to be carefully and scientifically done. This will certainly be education. Then comes the stage of execution, when productive work stands out as productive work. At this stage, work cannot be careless, casual or shoddy. Productive work has also to be as good as possible, consistent with the age-groups of children. In the earlier years production in the farm or workshop will yield little, but later the produce of innumerable boys and girls will not be inconsiderable. Whatever is produced should either go back to the management or to the boys and girls themselves. To begin with, the idea was that the produce should belong to the management. This might help in expanding elementary education in a poor country like India. Later this idea was changed and it was considered proper that whatever the children produced should belong to themselves. In terms of the conditions in India, self-sufficiency came largely to mean giving every child in a Basic school one noon meal a day and two sets of clothes per year. What prevented many children from coming to school was the lack of these two and if these could be supplied through the productive work of a Basic school, that school would be full of children. There will, of course, be a percentage of children who would not need these two, because their parents would be well enough. But the majority of the boys and girls would need them. Boys and girls studying in upper classes would produce more and make up for under-production in the lower classes. Teachers would work with the children and wherever parents and relations volunteered to help, that also would be encouraged.

Productive work is to be conceived more as an instrument of education than for productivity. Productivity in terms of economic value is only a necessary corollary. Care has, however, to be taken to ensure that productivity is not stressed at the cost of intellectual growth. Gandhi had said: 'The test of success is not simply the self-supporting character but that the whole perso-

nality has to be drawn out and developed through productive work in a scientific manner'. Music and drawing are an essential part of Basic education and their purpose is to bring out and develop the aesthetic talents of children. This shows again the comprehensiveness of the Gandhian concept of elementary education. It should not be forgotten that Gandhi considered the development of the skills of the fingers as an inescapable part of any good education for boys and girls.

Pupil teachers admitted for training in Basic teachers' training schools are generally required to have completed High school education. In some places they are called matriculates. The period of training is for two years. Keeping in view what the teacher would have to do in running a Basic School, the training school is itself run on the basis of a cooperative, productive, learning, self-reliant and self-governing community with the Headmaster as the official head and the elected pupil teacher, often called 'Prime Minister', as the non-official head of the community, and these two collaborating with each other to raise the level of the institution as high as possible.

Every pupil teacher has to learn one major and one subsidiary craft and there are certain broad standards set to evaluate his productive capacity. He has also to learn a number of subjects like child and adult psychology, school administration, language teaching and the contents of the syllabus etc. He has specially to learn how to assist children to learn through experience and by linking experience with knowledge and understanding. In other words, he has to get a sound working knowledge of the science and art of correlation.

Correlation is the method of linking experience and learning together. This might appear an over-simplification. But experience, in this context, covers the three areas already mentioned, namely, the natural environment, the social environment and the processes of productive work. If all these three areas are carefully studied and fully utilised, there is hardly any knowledge the elementary school boys and girls need to acquire which cannot be drawn or derived from them. Learning from experience is more natural, fruitful and simplar than learning through books,

which is a round-about method. Through a long period of time, during which teachers kept up the traditional methods of teach ing through text books, the more difficult method has become apparently the simpler and the more natural and simpler method of correlation appears to be harder and more remote. There is an illuminating story coming down from Plato. Some prisoners were kept for a very long period of time in a dark underground cave. Living in such a condition their eyes got used to the darkness and could see, at least partially, in darkness. When they were released at last, they began to blink in the sunlight and to grope about. Teachers, finding it easy to teach specific items from text books, got used to this method at the cost of the children and their full mental growth and now find it difficult to give up the old teaching methods and to actively and scientifically assist children in learning by guiding them through planned process of doing and experiencing.

Correlation is both a science and an art, and there are some prerequisite conditions which have to be fulfilled before it can succeed. Even a clever teacher would fumble without such preparation and training, but even an average teacher could fairly succeed with the necessary preparation. While the teacher has to handle correlation carefully and precisely, he has also to enable learning by children to be an exciting and joyful process by handling correlation also as an artist. Hence a Basic teacher has to fulfil the following conditions: (1) mastery of one major craft and good knowledge of one or two subsidiary crafts; (2) full knowledge of the subject-contents of the syllabus under different headings, which means a good deal of brushing up of general knowledge; (3) practice of community living based on their own self-government and sharing in community work; (4) appropriate practice teaching, not only in a model school attached to the training school but in a few ordinary Basic schools near by, emphasing the art of training at every stage; (5) continuous increase of general knowledge through discussions reading and group study; (6) practice in organising various types of productive activities and experience in relation to the subject-contents of the syllabus; and (7) application of the law of love

in practice to all situations in the training schools as a prelude to doing the same later in the Basic schools. Basic education rules out any physical punishment of children. In fact under student-self-government, disciplines are evolved from within and corrections made as part of self-assessment. Teacher-training in this process begins in the training school.

In choosing a craft or production work for use in a Basic school, the following considerations are to be kept in view: (1) Since the purpose of a craft or productive work in Basic school is mainly to learn through it, it necessarily follows that the craft or productive work should be full of possibilities for education; the more the better. (2) It should be a multi-process craft or work involving different activities. One good example is gardening and another is cotton craft. This latter involves plucking of cotton, cleaning and sampling cotton, ginning, carding, spinning and weaving, leading on to dyeing and printing and also to tailoring (3) It should be capable of being regulated from simpler to more complex processes, suiting the capacity of children from earlier to later grades. In other words it should be a craft capable of growing with the children from grade to grade. (4) It should be a a complete craft and not a truncated one. This means a craft from the raw-material stage to the finished product at the end of the eighth year. This will bring in the pride of consummating whatever is begun and the joy of production. (5) What is produced should not be fancy goods to be kept in a glass shelf for exhibition. Products should have a social value and should be capable of being utilised by the school and the surrounding community. This does not rule out artistic production. In fact, unless what is produced is also artistic, it would not generally be acceptable to anyone. (6) The craft or productive work should be capable at some stage of being broken up into projects encouraging group work and cooperativeness in production. (7) Such craft or productive work should be germane to the locality or the region. Raw materials should be within easy reach and some traditions of skills should be available in the area—whatever possible concerning the craft or productive work chosen.

Gandhi did not favour external examinations for Basic

schools. He wanted that continuous assessment of the life, work and studies of students by the teachers should replace external examination. Internal assessment thus plays an important role in the Basic school. In the cumulative effect, the life, work, habits, outlook, and the social and moral characteristics developed throughout the period of schooling are given adequate consideration in the final assessment along with attainments in academic and theoretical subjects.

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The Gandhian concept of a social order is called 'Sarvodaya'. The nearest equivalent in the English language to Sarvodaya would be something like 'Just, Peaceful, Decentralised and Democratic Socialism'. The 'Unto This Last' concept of social justice of Ruskin is implicit in Sarvodaya. It literally accepts the position that the speed of the fleet is the speed of the last boat. Therefore, we have in Sarvodaya the idea that full and equal justice should reach the weakest and the least in the community before it can be called a just and truthful community. Sarvodaya treats as unsatisfactory the rule by the majority, as in democracy, or the dictatorship of a determined and ruthless minority, as in Communism, or the ever-increasing State control, as in Socialism. Sarvodaya seeks to achieve justice for everyone through peaceful methods. It stands for revolution by consent and not by coercion of any kind. Among all the peaceful methods of revolution, education is the most potent. It is the number one weapon in the entire arsenal of nonviolent revolution. And justice once achieved should be maintained and nourished only through democratic processes. This last means progressive decentralisation of political and economic power, subject to some elastic federal authority only. It is towards the consummation of such a social order that Basic education points

the way through the transformation of the human mind right from childood.

Gokhale and Gandhi

P. KODANDA RAO

Long before Rabindranath Tagore anointed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as 'Mahatma Gandhi,' Gandhi himself acclaimed Gopal Krishna Gokhale as 'Mahatma Gokhale' as well as 'Gokhale the Good'. He met Gokhale for the first time in Poona in 1896, 'fell in love with him at first sight' and adopted him as his ideal, installing him in his heart of hearts as his teacher in politics and avowing himself as his disciple. He acknowledged Mahadev Govind Ranade, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak as his heroes, but only Gokhale as his King and Raja Guru. His consciousness of his discipleship rose as he came to know Gokhale more and at close quarters. He recorded that 'in the sphere of politics the place that Gokhle occupied in my heart during his lifetime and occupies even now was and is absolutely unique'.

When, in 1921, six years after the death of Gokhale, Gandhi fathered nonviolent non-cooperation, an anonymous letter questioned his claim to discipleship to Gokhale. Whereupon Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of July 13, 1921:

> 'He (Gokhale) seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. It does not matter to me that he may not have been any of these things. It was enough for me that I could discover no fault to cavil at. He was, and remains for me, the most perfect man in the political field.
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> 'Not that we had no differences. We differed even in 1901 in our views on social customs, e.g. widow marriage. We discovered differences in our estimate of Western civilization. He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on nonviolence. But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me.

Nothing could part us asunder. It would be blasphemous to conjecture what would have happened if he were alive today. I know that I would have been working under him. I have made this confession because the anonymous letter hurt me when it accused me of imposture about my political discipleship. Had I been remiss in my acknowledgement to him who is now dumb? I thought I must declare my faithfulness to Gokhale, especially when I seemed to be living in a camp which the Indian world calls opposite.'

If Gandhi held Gokhale in high respect, Gokhale held Gandhi in great regard. At the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in 1909, Gokhale said of Gandhi:

'A purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on the earth. Mr Gandhi is one of those men who, living an austerely simple life themselves and devoted to all the highest principles of love to their fellow-beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision. He may be described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriots among patriots, and we may say that in him Indian humanity at present has really touched its high-water mark.'

On another occasion Gokhale said of his 'dear and illustrious friend':

'Only those who have come in personal contact with Mr Gandhi as he is now, can realise the wonderful personality of the man. He is without doubt made of the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made. Nay more. He has in him the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men into heroes and martyrs.

'In all my life I have known only two men who have affected me spiritually in the manner in which Mr Gandhi does—our great patriarch, Mr Dadabhai Naoroji and my late Master, Mr Ranade, men before whom not only are we ashamed of doing anything unworthy, but in whose presence our very minds are afraid of thinking anything that is unworthy.'

Srimati Sarojini Naidu described Gokhale as 'the great saint and soldier of our national righteousness, whose life was a sacra-

ment and whose death was a sacrifice in the cause of Indian unity'.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who inspired Gokhale in his early career and later became his unsparing, and often his bitter, political opponent, unreservedly acknowledged Gokhale's high character and great public service. He said:

Gokhale was endowed with many qualities. But the supreme quality among them was his selfness and complete dedication to the service of the Motherland at a very young age. No one thinks much of those who devote their residual energy and time to public work in their retired life when all physical and mental powers have ebbed out. But when one comes across an extraordinary person who is endowed with the best of health and intelligence and has all the chances of worldly pleasures within his grasp and knows that he would make the greatest success if he went that way, but deliberately turns his back on that alluring prospect and resolves to devote himself to the service of his Motherland and is never weakened in his determination and perseverance, that person must be considered thrice blessed. Ghkhale had taken such a pledge and kept it till he breathed his last.

Among his British critics, Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, Finance Member of the Government of India, said that the Imperial Legislative Council was reduced to playing Hamlet without the Prince in the absence of Gokhale! Lord Curzon, the most imperial and imperious Viceroy of India, frankly admitted that he had 'suffered from the weight of his [Gokhale's] blows' in the Imperial Legislative Council, and acknowledged him as the 'Leader of the Opposition' and rejoiced in the 'stern joy which warriors feel in crossing swords with foemen worthy of their steel'. So great was his appreciation of Gokhale that within a couple of years of experience of him in the Imperial Legislative Council, Curzon recommended Gokhale for the honour of C.I.E. In his personal and private letter of December 31, 1903, to Gokhale, Curzon wrote:

'I hope you will allow me to accompany the announcement in tomorrow's gazette of the C.I.E. bestowed on you by H.M.

the King by a personal line from myself to say that the honour is offered to you in recognition of the abilities which are freely bestowed upon the service of your countrymen and of which I would ask no more than that they should continue to be so employed. I wish that India produced more such public men.'

Lord Hardinge was another Viceroy who admired Gokhale and collaborated with him in support of Gandhi's passive resistance in South Africa, and publicly rebuked the Rt. Hon. Gen. J.C. Smuts, then Prime Minister of South Africa, and braved an unprecedented breach of convention which outraged Smuts. Hardinge, who felt that Gokhale should receive some recognition for his great services, recommended the honour of K.C.I.E. for him. Gokhale came to know of it after it was approved by the King Emperor but before it was announced. He respectfully declined it. In the course of his letter he said;

'I shall always treasure this most generous appreciation . . . as among the best rewards of my public life. . . . Unless my wish is likely to be misunderstood, I would much prefer, deeply as I appreciate the proposed honour to continue under my present simple designation . . . based largely, though not wholly, on personal grounds.'

At the request of Gandhi, Gokhale visited South Africa to study the Indian question on the spot. In that land of apartheid Gokhale was received by the white people and the white Government, as well as the Indians, like Royalty. The Rt. Hon. Merriman, a veteran statesman and Senator, said to Gokhale: 'Sir, when men like you visit our country, they purify the atmosphere.'

So much has had to be said of Gokhale's greatness since he died nearly half a century ago and the present generation naturally knows less of him than of Gandhi.

Gokhale was born in 1866 and died in 1915, at the early age of fortynine. Gandhi was born three years after, in 1869, and was assassinated in 1948, at the age of seventy-six. Gokhale's public work may be said to have begun in 1886 when he was only twenty years old and when he joined the Deccan Education Society to serve it for twenty years on a meagre allowance of Rs 75 per

mensem. In the same year he began to write to the periodical *Mahratta* on public questions and made his first public speech on 'India Under British Rule'. His public work terminated only with his death. Just two days before it, when he was practically on his death-bed. Gokhale drafted with his own hand, at the request of Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Bombay, what later came to be known as his 'Political Will and Testament' containing his recommendations for the political advance of India which, if volunteered by the British Government immediately, would satisfy India for a good long while.

Gandhi, who studied law in England and adopted the career of a lawyer, may be said to have commenced his public work with his first public speech on Indians in South Africa in Pretoria, South Africa, in1893 and it ended only with his assassination in 1948 in India. The period of collaboration and conflict between the two may be said to be from 1896, when Gandhi met Gokhale for the first time in India, to 1915, when Gokhale died. It was concerned mostly with the South African Indian problem.

In 1896 Gandhi, in consultation with Gokhale as well as Tilak, addressed a public meeting in Poona, under the chairmanship of Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, on the South African Indian problem. Gokhale seconded the resolution. At the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1902, Gokhale used his outstanding influence to secure permission for Gandhi to move his resolution on Indians in South Africa. At the session of the Congress in 1909 Gokhale moved a resolution claiming for Indians not only the burdens but also the privileges of the Empire. In 1910 Gokhale carried his Resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council for the abolition of exporting indentured labour to Natal. In 1912 he visited South Africa at the invitation of Gandhi and with the good offices of the British Government. He was received with respect and cordiality both by the whites and the Indians. Gandhi acted as his private secretary, friend, philosopher and guide. Before meeting the South African Ministers, Gokhale studied the case not only of Indians but also of the whites with great earnestness and thoroughness. Gandhi

said:

> The diligence with which Gokhale prepared himself for his meeting with General Botha and General Smuts in Pretoria is never to be forgotton. On the day previous to the interview, he subjected Mr. Kallenbach and me to a searching examination. He himself woke at 3 a.m. and waked up both of us. He had already gone through the papers which we had placed before him. He now intended to cross-examine me and make sure that he himself was fully prepared for the ordeal. I humbly suggested that there was no need for him to take all that trouble; we did not mind if we had to continue the struggle a little longer; and we did not want to sacrifice him for our convenience. But accustomed as he was to throw his whole soul into whatever he did, he would not listen to me. How shall I describe his cross-examination or bestow due praise on his infinite capacity to take pains?

The result was that the South African Cabinet offered the relief sought by Indians and the repeal of the £3 tax on ex-indentured Indians.

The South African Government did not keep its promise, and Gandhi led a resumption of satyagraha by the Indians in South Africa. Whereupon Gokhale organised sympathetic agitation in India and collected funds for the satyagraha campaign in South Africa and shook India to its depths. Gokhale secured the active cooperation of the British Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge, who identified himself with the Indian cause. In his famous speech in Madras in December 1913, Hardinge said, among other things:

> Recently our compatriots in South Africa have taken matters in their own hands by organising what is called passive resistance to laws which they considered invidious and unjust. This is an opinion which we, who watch their struggles from afar, cannot but share . . . . In all this they have the sympathy of India but also of those like myself who, without being Indians themselves, have feelings of sympathy for the people of this country . . . . We have seen the widest publicity given to allegations that this movement of passive

> resistance has been dealt with by measures which would not for a moment be tolerated in any country that calls itself civilised.

While this bold and unprecedented criticism of South Africa pleased Gandhi and his compatriots in South Africa, its Government was deeply offended that the subordinate head of the subordinate Government of India should publicly castigate the proud white Government of self-governing Dominion!

Lord Hardinge had pressed on the South African Government to appoint an impartial commission, 'upon which Indian interests shall be fully represented', to make enquiries. The South African Government appointed a commission, but without representation of Indian interests. Whereupon Gandhi took a solemn vow not to tender evidence before it! Gokhale and Hardinge disapproved of Gandhi's action, and Gokhale failed to persuade Gandhi to drop it, for Gandhi said that he and his followers had taken the vow before God and nothing could shake them! Gokhale was deeply disappointed and suffered terribly, particularly in the then precarious state of his health, and exclaimed: 'Surely the Viceroy is right; Gandhi has no business to take a vow and tie himself up. This is politics, and compromise is the essence of it.' In a moment of extreme pain, Gokhale said to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri who was with him at the time: 'Well, Mr Sastri, you do not realise the danger I am in. If I were you, I would cable to Gandhi and say he was bringing Gokhale to the very verge of death. Won't you do this, just to save me?' Of course, Sastri realised that it was extreme agony that provoked these words and not a wish that they should be acted upon.

The Passive Resistance campaign ended with the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement in 1914, which afforded some relief to Indians. But it contained a clause empowering the South African Government to limit Indian immigration to South Africa. It was a surrender of India's claim to Imperial citizenship, which included the right of Indians to migrate and settle in any part of the British Empire. Gandhi and Gokhale had agreed to this surrender in return for the promise of a better life for Indians already in South Africa. Both of them were bitterly criticised by

their Indian friends in India, like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Dinshaw Watcha. Both Gandhi and Gokhale defended it as an inescapable compromise.

Gokhale was keen that Gandhi should return to India, join the Servants of India Society which he had founded in Poona in 1905, and even succeed him as its head. Accordingly, Gandhi returned to India and met Gokhale and the members of the Society. But mutual discussions revealed great and fundamental differences in ideals and methods between Gandhi and some of the members. In or out of the Society, Gandhi wanted a ashram, like the one he ultimately started in Sabarmati, which did not appeal to all the members of the Society. Gokhale advised Gandhi to spend a year travelling in India and to see and to listen but not speak in public on any public question. He hoped that the experience would modify Gandhi's views sufficiently to make him acceptable to the Society. As advised, Gandhi undertook an all-India tour. But by the time he finished it, Gokhale passed away. Soon after Gandhi sought admission to the Society. He recorded the episode as follows:

> The question of membership proved a very delicate matter for me to handle. Whilst Gokhale was there I did not have to seek admission as a member; I had simply to obey his wish, a position which I loved to be in. Launching on the stormy sea of Indian public life, I was in need of a sure pilot. I had had him in Gokhale and had felt secure in his keeping. Now that he was gone, I was thrown on my own resources, and I felt that it was my duty to seek admission. That I thought would please Gokhale's spirit. So, without hesitation and with firmness I began wooing.
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> Most of the members of the Society were in Poona at this juncture. I set about pleading with them and tried to dispel their fears about me. But I saw they were divided. . . . The section that was opposed to me held that they and I were as the poles asunder in various matters, and they felt my membership was likely to imperil the very objects for which the Society was founded.
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> Whereupon Gandhi withdrew his application for admission

out of loyalty to Gokhale and love for the Society. He said: 'It is true that I did not officially become a member of the Society but I have ever been a member in spirit. Spiritual relationship is far more precious than physical. Physical relationship divorced from spiritual is a body without soul.'

Srinivasa Sastri, who succeeded Gokhale as President of the Society, referred to this episode in his own characteristic style:

> True, the event [Gokhale's death] deprived us of the shelter afforded by a great name . . . . But his guidance had been clear and his example full of illumination. Our first trial, however, was not long in coming. Mr Gandhi, having completed the year of travel prescribed by Gokhale, knocked at our door for admission. Anxious was our consultations at the time. We saw deep differences between him and us and felt, though none could have given clear expression to it, that this political evolution would take him farther from us. Still our heart strembled as well as grieved when we told him that it was best for both of us to remain apart and pursue our several courses. The event vindicated our decision. We have indeed had many occasions to take the field against him.

Gandhi and Sastri had this in common: loyalty to Gokhale's personality and ideals. They differed in their policies in the post-Gokhale era.

Gandhi and the Hindu concept of Ahimsa

P. NAGARAJA RAO

The concept of ahimsa is a complex ethical virtue. It has figured prominently and is given enormous significance in the religion of Jainism. It has acquired special importance as a philosophy of life, and a technique of action has grown around it in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi during a period over of three decades. Further, the concept of ahimsa has great significance for us today who are insistently contemplating a new social order to outlaw war from our midst.

Manu and *Mahabharata* have declared that the cardinal virtues of Hinduism are purity, self-control, detachment, truth, and nonviolence. Nonviolence is the law of love. The sacredness of life in all sentient creation is affirmed as a cardinal truth. offence to sentient creation in any form is violence, whether injuring them, killing them, hurting their feelings, insulting them or destroying their rights, dignity or self-sense. The Jains carried the doctrine to incredible lengths. They were against killing any form. They held that we should neither kill nor get the killing done through an agent. The mere thought of killing is as much a moral evil as the actual killing. Any word expressing the desire to kill is also deemed to be killing. The principle of ahimsa involves purity of thought, word and deed in the practice of universal love. It is described as a great vow (mahvrata). The Hindu ethical thinkers looked upon ahimsa as one of the sadharana dharmas, But they did not insist on its unexceptionable application to all defined and undefined eventualities. They made exceptions. They held that animals could be killed in sacrifices, because the killing was enjoined by the Vedas. The sacrificial nature of the act purified the agent and the animal

alike and hence it was not deemed unethical. Kings were allowed to kill forest animals for sport. Non-vegetarianism was not deemed a violent act.

The use of violence was not completely ruled out in Hindu ethics. It was hedged around by a number of restrictions. An unwarranted and arbitrary use of it for one's mere pleasure, or in order to spite others, is condemned severely. The use of violence is to be minimal in the case of the brahmin and the hermit. The ideal brahmin is to use spiritual force against physical violence for self-protection. Though the Hindu emphasizes the supremacy of spiritual power, he does not say that physical force should not be used. There is a celebrated verse in the *Mahabharata* which clinches the issue and formulates the ideal: 'In the front the four Vedas; at the back the bow with the arrows; on one side the spirit achieving its object through the might of the spirit, on the other side military force achieving its own ends.'

Force and violence are used to bring the anti-social and anti-ethical elements under control. Nonviolence is the highest principle to which we are exhorted to approximate. Perfect ahimsa is an ideal. It is like the straight line geometry. Because we are not able to love our enemies and win them, we should not submit to injustice or acquiesce in the horrors done by others. There should be no neutrality between good and bad, values and disvalues. Manu declares that those who poison us, burn us and kill us ought to be killed. The use of violence is necessary to keep off and punish anti-social and agressive elements who hold to the doctrine that might is right. The Hindu rajya-dharma makes a clear distinction between violence (himsa) and punishment (danda). The former causes injury to an innocent person; the latter is legal restraint of guilt. Force is not the law given but it is instrument that ministers to the needs of dharma. The theory of punishment is ingrained and worked into the structure of the cosmos. None can escape the consequences of his acts. No act of ours is private and none is unimportant. The act is its trail brings the punishment, like Fate. Sometimes the punishment is realized here and now and at other times in

the life to come. The elaborate description of hell and its torments and the pleasures of paradise are the means by which the Hindu religion persuades men to do good and to keep away from evil. The Hindu theory of punishment is retributive and deterrent in its motive. The *Bhagwad Gita* is regarded by many, with the exception of Shankara and Gandhi, as supporting and enjoining the use of violence against an evil doer. (The injunction to fight is repeated five times in the *Gita*.) The message of the *Gita* according to them is to fight the enemy and crush him, Krishna tried every peaceful means to bring peace between the two families; having failed he advised Arjuna to fight for the cause of justice and from a sense of duty, as a dedication to the Lord against the selfish and unrighteous foes. Krishna declared after his unsuccessful ambassadorial mission: 'Duryodhana was told what was truthful, wholesome and benefical; but the fool is not amenable. I therefore consider chastisement by war, danda, as the fourth expedient proper for the sinners: by no other means can they be curbed.'

Violence has to be used to hold in check unruly elements. The *Gita* in modern political parlance stands for the principle of collective security and asks us to fight all unjust aggression. Ahimsa does not rule out the use of force. Perfect ahimsa belongs to the sage. Violence is neutral in its ethical nature. Its value is determined by the use it is put to. A knife in the hands of a murderer leads to a crime. We cannot say that violence in itself is evil.

Gandhi's interpretation of the concept of ahimsa is a glorious chapter in the history of Indian ethical thought and Hindu ethics. He regards 'violence' as an evil in itself. He does not consider it to be natural. He is uncompromising in his opposition to it. He wanted to build a world based on truth and nonviolence; and not on untruth and lovelessness. He believed that violence could bring no good to man in any sphere. His doctrine is built on his conception of human nature as being essentially good. He believed that man is divine in his essence. He also believed in the oneness of the Spirit that is behind all creation. It is our false view that 'We are so many separate floating islands that is responsible

for our violence'. There cannot be happiness for any one of us until it is won for all. Fear is the cause of violence, according to the Gandhian analysis. Fear is the most degrading human emotion. It destroys our mind and corrupts our morals. This is the reason why on many occasions Gandhi said that he 'preferred violence to cowardice'. The moment we realise that we are all parts of a single Spirit, there will be no violence for the simple reason that it hurts one's own self. The Brihadaranyaka declares, 'Fear results only from a second principle.'[1] Further, Gandhi believed that men are perfectible and educable through persuasion and reason. So declared that he would continue to preach nonviolence till such time as there was no one of the opposite view. 'If blood is to be shed, let it be mine.' He believed that good would ultimately triumph. He wanted not only individuals to use nonviolence but nations and groups as well. He did not admit that what was ethically good to an individual could ever be politically reprehensible to the nation. He did not divide politics and morals, nor ends and means. He believed that an unjust means defeats a good end. In this philosophy ends and means are convertible terms. The end can never justify the means. Nor did he agree with the communist view that the ends are the means. It is wrong to think that nonviolence is an impracticable utopia. It is the urgent need for the age. The alarming nuclear developments, the inclusiveness of wars and the damage that war brings not only to the combatants but also to civilians and future generations are enough for men to regard nonviolence as the imperative need of the age. We have realised today that wars are politically stupid, economically futile and ethically unjustifiable. If we do not have faith in the divine nature of man, it is difficult for us to give up violence. If we think that human cussedness and the principle of evil are a part and parcel of reality, as real as man's goodness, it is difficult for us to outlaw violence. It ultimately depends on our faith and conception of man.

Further the psychology of violence is self-defeating. Every act

1. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 1.4.2.

of violence produces defiance in those whom we attack. Violence produces greater violence. The greater violence is defeated by a much greater violence. What we need is to put an end to this spiral of violence. This can be done by ahimsa or soul force. We should not run away from the scene of battle. We must meet the enemy and give him an opportunity to reflect on the wrong he has done. We must seek to educate him and convert him, but not by inflicting physical violence on him. It is a lateral approach. It seeks to overcome the opposition and thus change the mind of the opponent. All this is based on the faith that man is essentially good. Anybody whose faith falters in this has no use for nonviolence. Nonviolence is not for the weak. The *Mahabharata* declares, 'The hard is overcome by the gentle; even the non-hard is overcome by it; there is nothing impossible for the gentle, therefore the gentle is more powerful'. 'Therefore let man overcome anger by non-anger and evil by good; let him overcome the miser by liberality and the liar by truth.'

It is again this metaphysical faith in the unity of existence that makes the Hindu proclaim that 'Nonviolence is the highest truth from which all other truths proceed'. There is no denying the fact that ahimsa played a very important role in the ethical philosophy of the Hindus.

Gandhian Truth or Christian Love?

ROBERT STEELE

The once-famous Joos Ballet of Germany impressed me with its dance called 'The Green Table'. This ballet presents a group of peacemakers who meet round a conference table to solve the problems of their respective nations. Instead of making peace, they end up having a brawl. Black eyes and bloody noses abound. No peace is made around the green table. Some of the heated discussions which went on at the World Peace Meeting, held at Santiniketan and Sevagram, in 1949-50, reminded me of this dance satire on peace conferences.

One moment, perhaps the first that recalled the ballet to me, was when the raised voices of Heinz Kraschutski and Kakasahib Kalelkar attracted my attention. I behaved as I had already learned to behave in India—a practice which I very much enjoyed—and sauntered over to listen to this conversation just as if I had been invited. Heinz Kraschutzki was using the same illustration he used in an article several years later to try to prove that love is a superior virtue to truth. He said: 'There are occasions in which I doubt if Gandhi himself would have kept to the truth even though he considered truth to be the most essential principle in life. Imagine the following which happened to us in Europe more than once during Hitler's time. One evening a group of S.S. men came to the house and asked the owner whether there was a Jew hiding there. Has the owner to speak the truth in order not to sin against a high principle, which would result in his delivering his fellowman who has sought shelter in his house, in full confidence, over to the S.S. men? Or has he to deceive the S.S. men in order to save a man's life? What ranks higher, truth or love?'[1]

1. 'Truth in daily Life', *F.F.T. Quarterly*, November, 1957, p. 115.

At the time Heinz believed adamantly that love ranks the higher. (I doubt if his thinking has changed but I don t know.) Kakasahib Kalelkar did not convince him that truth ranks the higher. In the discussion Kakasahib repeatedly expressed the idea that truth should be followed absolutely, and in the long run of consequences the best possible outcome would happen. He stated this idea in different words but did not support it at the time with examples. 'One never makes a mistake', Kakasahib Kalelkar said, 'by always being faithful to the principle of telling the absolute truth'. Thus, this conversation between German and Indian peacemakers came to an impasse at Sevagram. Heinz Kraschutzki felt he had an experience under the Nazi regime of being in desperate circumstances which persons without that experience could not fathom. He was certain he had behaved in the best way possible, yet it involved deceit and subterfuge. Kakasahib Kalelkar could not think that even without his having had such experience wilful deception could ever improve a situation, and he strove to echo Gandhi unflinchingly.

After almost fifteen years where do we stand in such a debate? Is it merely a debate or is it now more of a crucible in our experience than ever? Or is it only a battle of words? Are the answers irreconcilable because the question of supremacy is an irrelevant one? Or is this a subject which, during every possible breathing space between violent conflagrations, we should continue to thresh out for ourselves? I would think most persons would agree it is questionable to preoccupy ourselves with what we think Gandhi would do, but the study of his and other cogent writings on the subject can help us to understand and clarify the priority of our loyalties.

Gandhi said, God is truth. Heinz Kraschutzki is backed up by Jesus of Nazareth who said, 'God is love'. Also he is supported by Paul of Tarsus who, in writtng to the Corinthians, designated as Chapter 13 of First Corinthians, proclaims love is supreme. The only rivals of love are faith and hope. He arrives at these goals of our life after putting aside lesser goals, such as knowledge. He says, 'For our knowledge is imperfect

and our prophecy is imperfect'.[2] 'Knowledge' and 'prophecy' in biblical literature have to do with what the nabhi (spokesmen for God) proclaim as truth. To the extent 'knowledge' means 'truth' for Paul, he puts it lower down on the ladder of virtues. Probably Heinz Kraschutzki would be supported by most Christians whether they think about the subject or not. 'Love' has been placed on the pedestal of highest virtues for Christians so unquestionably for so long, that the confrontation with Gandhi's thought is a needed prod for the investigation of this Christian status-quo, consummatory virtue. Many persons today make it almost a cult to decry the amount of relativism in Christian thought. Particularly, Emil Brunner, Karl Barth and other Continental theologians and philosophers feel this free-wheeling relativism is one of the main reasons for the degradation of the so called Christian part of the world: anything anyone wants to do may be all right and even good dependent upon the circumstances of his action, his motivation, the consequences of his act, and the sincerity and integrity of his behaviour. Thus, last year when University of California students at Berkeley had a chance to question Paul Tillich, a theologian originally from the University of Marburg in Germany but now the most respected and influential theologian in the United States, they tried to put him on the spot by the question, 'Is there anything you hold to absolutely? Is there an absolute in your thought?' In many ways he, too, is a relativist and shares some of the thought of theologians, philosophers and psychologists who have little to do with absolutism, but he had a non-relative answer of one word—'Love'. By this answer he committed himself to saying that one thing in life is not relative—there is one thing he will stand by absolutely, no matter where he is or what happens. Most thinking and unthinking Christians or so-called Christians, and Jesus, Paul, and Paul Tillich join Heinz Kraschutzki in saying love is the crucible by way of which we should choose what to do and say. My *Webster's Collegiate*

2. *The New Testament*, Revised Standard Version. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946, pp. 374.

Dictionary, 5th edition, says, 'Truth is the quality or state of being true; veracity, sincerity, genuineness, agreement with that which is represented; correspondence to reality; that which is in accord with what is, has been, or must be'. And love is, 'A feeling of strong personal attachment induced by sympathetic understanding, or by ties of kinship; to take delight or pleasure in, as to love books; strong liking, fondness; good will; as of love of learning, love of country, etc'. These dictionary definitions are shallow and overlap—or do they suggest that a demarcation between 'love' and 'truth' cannot be made? Certainly, 'sincerity' and 'genuineness' must be present in love, and 'understanding', sympathetic and I hope also empathic, is an ingredient of truth.

Bharatan Kumarappa, in the volume titled *Sarvodaya*, is supported by Gandhi's text in his placing 'truth' as the first of the virtues required for the achievement of sarvodaya. 'Truth' is numbered one; 'nonviolence or love' is numbered two. About truth in this edition of his writings Gandhi says: 'All of our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life. Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone so following Truth, it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves tapas—self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and thus is redirected to the right path.'[3]

The second of the virtues, 'nonviolence or love', deals principally with ahimsa, and the word, 'love', does not come

3. M.K. Gandhi, *Sarvodaya* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House. 1954), p. 8.

into it. (This makes 'love' in the heading seem tacked on.) But Gandhi related ahimsa to truth: 'Without ahimsa it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disengage and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth, unstamped, metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse and which is the reverse? Nevertheless ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.'[4]

Jesus and Christian writings en masse equate God with love. Gandhi did the same with truth. A careful reading of these passages of Gandhi's writings reveals his almost equating God with nonviolence or ahimsa. 'Truth should be the breath of our life. . . . Without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles of life.' Following truth automatically sets one on the right way. But, 'ahimsa is our supreme duty'. Ahimsa is the means. Truth is the end. Yet truth will set us right, which almost equates it with a means. Jesus sounds very much like Gandhi in this passage: 'Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" '. A perusal of the teaching of Jesus makes it appear that for him God or love was the end and truth the means.

Can we look to sources like Gandhi and Jesus and say they represent opposing camps on the subject of the supremacy of love or truth? When both are described and defined their concepts seem to melt into one idea. Sincerity, freedom, self-sacrifice, and fearlessness are the ingredients of both truth and love. Can either exist without these same qualities? Gandhi's speaking of truth in terms of non-self-interest, total renunciation and service sound like descriptions of love more than of truth to a person who has been exposed to Christian teachings. Gandhi's concept of truth is far larger than the matter of

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

thinking or speaking with as much honesty and factualness as possible. Jesus's many expositions of the nature of God,of love, of the Kingdom of God agree that God is true to a moral order which is a final arbiter of man's destiny. Feeling of affection for man is present in God, but that is a mere part of the relationship between God and man. The other part brings in man's responsibility for using his freedom intelligently and making his life as true a reflection of the workings of moral law as possible.

Rather than occupy ourselves with differences between gurus, which may reduce itself to a discourse in semantics, I would like Heinz Kraschutzki and Kakasahib Kalelkar to concern themselves more with the communication and moral problem involved when Nazi S.S. men pound on your door and ask you to hand over the Jew. This situation, combined with similar situations of persons being asked to inform on former alleged Communist friends or on fellow students who have broken Gandhian ashram vows, and the ever-present and growing infiltration of government and police into private lives, might well draw on the combined imagination and morality of these two men.

By looking backwards to Heinz's old chestnut, perhaps we can better look forward to contemporary situations involving factual honesty, and honest and dishonest silences, protection and loyalty. Heinz Kraschutzki expresses concern and love for the Jew. How is this? Why not include the S.S. men in his love? The latter may need it more than the Jew and, for all Heinz Kraschutzki knows, he may deserve it also. The S.S. man is in a more tragic pinch than the Jew. The Jew knows he is in a pinch and he may get away. The S.S. man has sunk from or else has not risen to human-beingness or he would be unable to do his job. Should Heinz Kraschutzki have sympathy for one at the expense of the other? Both need and may deserve Heinz Kraschutzki's sympathy. (His responsibility for the two does not suggest he need treat them identically in the same moment of time.) Why should one be deceived to save the other? Is it possible for any duration of time to maintain this kind of deception to abet salvation? More cogent, I should think, would be what

Heinz Kraschutzki could do to stop the evil pursuit of an S.S. man or his counterpart and the kind of orders under which he acts. If Heinz Kraschutzki says, 'There is no Jew in my house', he has put himself in a weaker rather than a stronger position in order to attack the authority that causes the situation. The man who has sullied himself with falsehood is in a weakened position to challenge the behaviour of the authority. Wouldn't the objective of a Heinz Kraschutzki or a Kakasahib Kalelkar in such a situation be to save the life of the Jew and to unhinge the authority from bestiality and possible hate or ignorance and secure him to ove? The crucible of his morality is whether it may save the lives of all Jews even before all are threatened and the S.S. men from their evil orders.

From what I recall of Kakasahib Kalelkar's abiding by the principle of absolute truth in the situation, felt the fact might be stated, 'Yes, there is a Jew hiding in this house'. This would prove the honesty and trustworthiness of the protector to the S.S. men. They would respect him for his truthfulness, and this respect would win him a place of influence in which he might succeed in being a protective influence for the Jews. His absolute truthfulness bolstered by absolute fearlessness would give him authority and power in the community, so that he might rally community forces to curb the brutality of the S.S. men.

'But how about this poor Jew?' I recall Heinz Kraschutzki asking. He may not be ready or choose to have his protector turn him over to sure death at the hands of the Nazis no matter how important absolute truth is even to God! He wants to save his life. The Jew could be a child or young person who has yet to think and assume any responsibility for serving truth. Heinz Kraschutzki says, the Jew is depending upon the deceit of the householder and is in his house 'in full confidence' that the latter will save him. Kakasahib rebutted, the Jew should not wish any betrayal of truth on his behalf. And his chances of survival may be better if he is fearless and comes out of hiding, and conducts himself with dignity, and determines to love rather than hide from his enemy. When truth is upheld and an atmosphere is created which makes love demonstrable, the weak are

protected by the truthfulness of the strong.

To return to the real situation, my guess is that Heinz Kraschutzki and others who risked their necks to provide an underground get-away for Jews, were themselves too overwhelmed by the numbers who came to them to be secreted out of the country before they landed in a concentration-camp crematorium to have strength and time left to try to love the S.S men into a turn-about-face transformation. In the emergency, love acted to snatch Jews out of the hands of the Nazis, and in itself was a superhumanly large undertaking.

Am I right in feeling that the supremacy of truth or love is not an either/or matter? Truth and love are one and peace-making in the world will not be farthered by a concern as to which ranks higher or making a shibboleth of holding one or the other or both absolutely? Love and truth both should be held somewhat relatively and as motivators of speech and behaviour. It seems wooden-minded to follow a rule and to act as if we were automatons dominated by preconceived ideas about the meaning of truth and love. Contrary to Heinz Kraschutzki and Kakasahib Kalelkar's absolutism, which risks dogmatism, shouldn't we leave space in our thinking for trusting our own intuition and good sense to lead us to the highest virtue and 'correct behaviour' when a situation confronts us? The relativity of this 'solution' and its dependence upon the wisdom of the individual makes it a more difficult course to follow, but if this is the soundest resolution of the dilemma, then we need to pursue it.

While we plan to act in terms of what our here-and-now existence prompts, this does not mean there is not value to be derived from theorizing, anticipating, and comparing decisions and their consequences. When the S.S. man pounds at the door of the person who tries to be loyal to both love and truth as guides to behaviour, what does he do? I wonder what solution both Heinz Kraschutzki and Kakasahib Kalelkar might find which would not compromise love and truth. Both, no doubt, would agree that the householder who is concealing Jews ought to be fearless. But would both agree that the owner should feel love for the S.S. man as well as the Jew? (Heinz Kraschutzki

has seen and been talked to by an S.S. man, so he is the one who can speak from experience about its difficulty.) A loving and truthful protector of Jews would not feel responsible for the Jew at the expense of the S.S. man. He would not make a misstatement of fact, and he would refuse to let himself be pinned down by a question that tries to force him to state a fact that he prefers to withhold. Need a person feel responsible for answering fatuous or infamous questions? The love/truth exponent had better tell the Jew before the S.S. men come to the door that there is more at stake than going to all lengths to save him. The love/truth campaign is also being levelled at the S.S. men, the Nazis, and all in authority who might bring destruction upon all Jews and others. The inspiration of the moment is to be trusted, and it is not possible to be certain of the outcome. The protector cannot promise he will succeed in saving the Jew. Risk is involved in the encounter, but since there is no satisfactory moral behaviour that does not involve risk, it is hoped the Jew may remain, accept the hide-away, and join his protector when feasible to make a fearless and loving assault upon the S.S. man.

If it is possible to know beforehand that Jews are to be hunted and persecuted, their protector would not wait until the S.S. man comes pounding on his door. Instead, if the Jew is to be hidden, he would have such an ingenious hide-away that the doors of the house may be left unlocked so that S.S. men may visit the house easily at any time. S.S. men may search while the protector is at the Nazi headquarters fighting to do all he can to end this wretched behaviour. He would be more the friend of Jews when he is in the presence of the Nazis and witnessing to his position before the Nazis because they, too, are human beings rather than when he is at home with the Jews. He would question the questions put to him. His denouncement of the barbarities taking place would mark him as an undaunted, non-fear-ridden man.

If a Jew is caught at 4.00 a.m. behind his unbarred door, then ought not his behaviour to be as similar as possible to what it would have been had he been able to take the initiative? I wonder what Heinz Kraschutzki and Kakasahib Kalelkar would

think of the following hypothetical conversation:

Question: Is there a Jew here?

Answer: You have no right to ask that question and I will not answer it. Jews, like yourself, are my neighbours and fellow countrymen and if you are a citizen of—you know this as well as I do. Why are you hunting them? What wrong have they done you? Since you have disturbed me and my family already, you might as well come in and have some coffee.

Question: If you are hiding a Jew, produce him, or we will search.

Answer: Go ahead and search. If you trail Jews like bloodhounds, I hope every house in this city will become a hotel for Jews. If you find Jews who have no place to go, I hope you'll tell them that as long as I am here, I welcome them to my house. I shall do my part to make our houses throughfares for Jews so long as you are given orders to persecute them. Perhaps some of you would like to stay here and watch for them to come? Jews can be small, and one might eventually crawl out of the fireplace. Come in, all of you, if you wish. We won't get any more rest this night. We'll start breakfast, such as it is, soon. We'll give you some of the little we have.

The S.S. man may arrest the protector and find the Jew hiding on the roof or in a wardrobe, unless the stalling that has gone on at the door has given the Jew a chance to leave the building by a sacret passageway and take his chances on the street until he finds another shelter or manages to return to the house of his protector. If the German citizen who chooses not to indulge in a mis-statement of fact despite his feeling responsible for the protection of the Jew gets arrested, this is a part of risk. He has a better chance of being saved than the Jew, and in this more demanding way, he can demonstrate his love for the Jew as well as the S.S. man and his country. His fearlessness may be his great gift to the Jew to help him to triumph over his own fear. The German holding to love and truth should be prepared to stick his neck out farther in courting danger than can be expected of the Jew who is the target of the danger. When the S.S. man refuses to talk and put up with any stalling from the German

citizen then the German citizen has protected the Jew by putting himself on the spot. This is what Jesus asks of us—'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15 : 12-14).[5]

Now we know from hundreds of case histories and many research projects that have been undertaken that those who said 'No' resolutely at the beginning to the demands of Hitler had the best chance for survival. It was the weakest and most fear-ridden who were taken and wiped out first.

Now, years latter, we may have the detachment to think through the right or the most nearly right action for us in times of duress; Jews versus Nazis can still serve as a testing case for our thinking. Many parallel cases are with us today, and probably we are too close to them to perceive clearly what is at stake. Also we may be too one-sided ourselves and cannot escape being somewhat emotionally involved. We want to be led in such matters by the ideals of truth and love and let our loyalty to them and our understanding of them be the pivots for our behaviour.

The problem was the same for those New Englanders in the United States who operated an 'underground railway' for run-away slaves prior to the Civil War. They were acting in dis-obedience to the federal law by their refusal to aid another citizen, a southern plantation owner, in his personal property rights over slaves. The infamous Tokyo Rose, who helped the Japanese against the United States in World War II, is a 'war criminal' still at large who is rumoured to be hiding today somewhere in Chicago. The parent confronts the problem in knowing where a son is who has been convicted of being a deserter from the armed forces and refuses to divulge this information. Muslims have been shielded by Hindus and Muslims have run interference for Hindus. Chinese have been given away as hostage in Calcutta by other Calcutta citizens who wished to wreak their vengeance upon a bootmaker who had

5. *The New Testament, op. cit.*, p. 234.

nothing to do with the Chinese aggression inflicted upon Tibet. Mexico, Latin America and Switzerland today provide asylum for myriads of persons who have run afoul of some law or who made themselves so unpopular that they had to leave their homes to avoid being incarcerated or perhaps murdered.

These are dramatic situations as compared to a mundane one which touches the same problem. Secretaries the world over are deceiving buffers for bosses who want 'protection'. The secretary is told to say, 'Mr so-and-so is not in, is in conference, or can't be reached now', while he may be sitting within earshot of this falsification. He has a secretary misrepresent the facts because he may wish to avoid certain persons and shield himself from giving them offence. When he himself is caught by the caller, he must preserve his image of being a generous and helpful man filled with goodwill. In reality he uses a protective device which helps him to get on with what interests him and his welfare most. His love is primarily for himself and telling the truth about his availability or non-availability is of little consequence to him. His sin is greater than that of the secretary because he is its originator and has by his authority been the spreader of the contamination of lies.

Even the sheltered university professor, who should know the answers to a question of this nature, frequently does not know, and if he does know he sometimes lacks the courage to act accordingly. He is caught in three-way conflagrations which make it difficult to adhere to love and truth and still keep his job —in case that is important to him as it usually is. He may post students' grades on his door or give them to a newspaper for publication; this will humiliate those with poor marks. If he loved his students would he keep this information confidential? By making all the grades public he protects himself by letting all of those know who made good grades; they will wish the professor's grading not be challenged because they are content. They may band together proclaiming the justice of the gradient which protects the professor from the disgruntled. A faculty is told by a dean they are megaphones to students, and they should watch carefully what they say about their dislikes of administra-

tive procedures; their dislikes when known give students ammunition for their attacks on administration when they find out they have a bedfellow among certain faculty persons. Yet when the professor is out of sympathy with the administration, his silence puts him in a bind with students. Should he be discreet, talk, or be silent? If he talks it will show him to be in sympathy with student grievances; he risks making himself the bete noire of the administration and his dean. A student brings a grievance to his adviser concerning the injustice of another faculty member to him; the student feels he is being subjected to abuse in class because of the anti-semitism of this faculty member. The 'gentleman's' rule is that a priori the faculty is right and the students are wrong. The faculty adviser knows the faculty member in question is antisemitic. Love for all concerned and a determination to tell the truth rather than to sidestep by way of an innuendo, question, or silence makes the pressure of this Gandhian and Christian ideal a burdensome one.

As long as we have boundaries over the world, the door of a house, a river. the demarcation between states and countries, any line, that is a product of the imagination of men, which they belive offers them protection and domination on their side of the line will result in truth versus love altercations of various sorts. A strain of primitiveness springing from fear has yet to be overcome. According to the press, the great dancer Rudolf Nureyev bolted for the 'free world' by running into the arms of policemen when he was at the airport in Paris to get a plane which would return him to the Soviet Union. One wonders if truly he is in any kind of a 'free world', and if so, how long it may last before tables may be turned. To the extent that nations keep up their pretence in having boundaries that are efficacious, and countries such as Germany, Korea, India and Pakistan complicate the problem by being 'devided', we have a long way to go to implement the thought of our seers, Gandhi, Jesus, Heinz Kraschutzki and Kakasahib Kalelkar, for whom truth-love-nonviolence are basically both means and ends to right action.

A bit of verbal warring broke out in the midst of the first and

last World Peace Conference held in India. It struck fire between Europeans and Indians who had far more in common than that which separates them, but its presence among such likeminded and dedicated devotees of nonviolence is proof of the complexity of knowing our ways to right action. We can deepen and better perform the right action to the extent we have a courageous faith in the power of truth and confess it, and yet we may be violent if for the sake of facts we are oblivious to the feelings and weaknesses of others. This is not an unimportant subject which merely serves as the subject of one more article in one more journal. Its testing by amplification and airing is the highest honour we can bestow upon our thought and ideals. We serve ourselves and our ideals to the extent we test ruthlessly what we believe with a view to discovering just how much truth our thought contains and how much love our action incarnates.

Gandhi on the Dignity of the Human Person

V. TELLIS-NAYAK

The most salient feature that stands out unmistakably in every aspect of the social revolution that Gandhi worked out in India, is the deep respect with which he held man. The task of substituting new social schemes for the old ones is ultimately a task of dealing with men who constitue the society. And so in attempting such a task Gandhi had to deal with the millions of his countrymen belonging to various social groups. In his approach to these diverse classes he had a marvellous consistency in his attitude which can well be described as a sincere respect for the dignity of the human personality.

It was actually much more than a mere attitude. It was a natural outflow, an instinctive expression of the deep-seated conviction of the Mahatma. For in truth it was this conviction about the inviolable dignity that he attached to every single person that proved to be his spring of action. The existing conditions of Indian society were such a blatant violation of the basic rights of the human personality that naturally flow from his high dignity, that they clashed with his convictions and jarred on his sensibilities; and of sheer necessity Gandhi was prodded on to take the momentous decision to make his 'happiness dependent upon that of the poorest'[1] till he would 'wipe every tear in every eye'[2].

To have, therefore, any fair understanding of the view Gandhi had of man, and of the dignity and respect he attached to the human personality, one will have to take into account his various

1. *Harijan*, 27 October 1933.
2. Quoted in *Gandhian Technique and Tradition*, by R.N. Bose, p. 25.

activities and analyse them. For the Gandhian revolution in its essence aimed at resetting man into his rightful position from where the adverse elements of an egoistic society had pulled him down and depersonalised him.

Economic Equality

Economic equality is a natural consequence of the equality of rights that men enjoy in a society. It simply means, Gandhi says, that everybody should have enough of facilities to provide for his needs as a human person.[3] No one can deny a man that right. For Gandhi nothing could have been more evident. 'Every man has an equal right to the necessities of life. . . .'[4] In this he also instinctively included each man's right to opportunities for the full flowering of his personality.[5]

But the Gandhian concept of economic equality does not imply a narrow or absolute equality of property, opportunities etc. The simple reason is that such a concept cannot correspond to actual reality. 'Even in the most perfect world we shall fail to avoid inequalities. . . .'[6] For 'inequalities in intelligence and even opportunities will last till the end of time. A man living on the bank of a river has any day more opportunities of growing crops than one living in an arid desert.'[7]

So too may needs vary from person to person as those of the elephant and the ant'.[8] One may need 'two shawls in winter' whereas another does not 'require any warm clothing whatsoever'.[9] And that means equality cannot imply 'that every one would have the same amount of goods.'[10]

In spite of this Gandhi was careful to insist on the fundamental and 'essential equality' of all, and said it 'is not to be mis-

3. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
4. *Young India*, 26 March 1931.
5. Cf. *Harijan*, 4 August 1946.
6. *Harijan*, 2 January 1937.
7. *Young India*, 26 March 1931.
8. *Harijan*, 21 April 1946.
9. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
10. *Ibid.*

sed'[11]. Every one is equal as far as every one has a right to 'have enough for his or her needs'[12]. And justice demands that every one recognise this right of others. 'My ideal', Gandhi said, 'is equal distribution, but so far as I can see it is not to be realised. I work therefore for equitable distribution.'[13] Indeed he was ready to call himself and others 'thieves' if they possessed things not of immediate use when so many of their countrymen lacked the necessities of life.[14] It was again his simple logic of justice that concluded that in such circumstances even 'to partake of sweetmeats and other delicacies . . . is equivalent to robbery'.[15] For you have no right to the superfluities of life as long as a single person does not 'have enough for his or her needs'. This is merely his doctrine of economic equality pushed to its loigcal extreme.

Doctrine of Trusteeship

One of the applications of the doctrine was Gandhi's scheme of trusteeship. Economic equality suggests 'equal distribution' and this in turn points to the doctrine of trusteeship. 'Indeed at the root of this doctrine of equal distribution must be that of the trusteeship of the wealthy for the superfluous wealth possessed by them. For according to the doctrine they may not possess a rupee more than their neighbours.'[16] Though I may come by wealth either through legacy or trade and industry, 'What belongs to me [of it] is the right to an honourable livelihood no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community.'[17]

This implies man's equality of rights to the goods of this earth. And the only way of maintaining this equality of rights in

11. *Young India*, 26 March 1931.
12. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
13. *Young India*, 17 March 1946.
14. *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 377.
15. Quoted in *Ambassador's Report*, by Chester Bowles, p. 73.
16. *Harijan*, 25 August 1940.
17. *Harijan*, 3 June 1939.

practice is to ordain our property to the common good of 'people as a whole'[18] through the principle of trusteeship. 'Earn your crores by all means', Gandhi told his countrymen, 'but understand that the wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people'.[19] It is trusteeship therefore which will help 'in realising a state of equality on earth',[20] which is the essence of the Gandhian view of man's rights.

Dignity of the Worker

One of the important fields where Gandhi extended his fight for economic equality was the factory. He saw the poor worker subjected to gross injustice and reduced below the dignity that is his natural due as a person. Gandhi's fight for the right of the worker was chiefly evident in his claims for proper conditions of work, a fair standard of wages, the rights of labour in production and the means to fulfil those rights.

As for the conditions of work, Gandhi had to fight against many abuses against human dignity. He insisted that children should not be made to work in factories. The employment of young children is a 'national degradation' and a 'misuse of children', he insisted.[21] He constantly pleaded for shorter hours of work and more leisure for workmen so that their condition be not 'reduced to that of the beast'.[22] He also demanded safety measures against dangers and bad hygiene.

It is, however, when he fought for proper standards of wages that the Gandhian ideal stood out in all its clarity. As usual he did advance arguments from many quarters to support his claims; for example, paying proper wages would boost up industry itself, he said.[23] But his main contention, rightly, was the welfare and the rights and dignity of the worker himself. 'The

18. *Harijan*, 23 February 1947.
19. *Harijan*, 1 February 1942.
20. M.K. Gandhi, *Economic and Industriai Life and Relations*, Vol. 1, p. 161.
21. *Young India*, 5 May 1920.
22. *Young India*, 28 April 1920.
23. *Harijan*, 13 February 1937.

labourer is worthy of his hire. This law is as old as the hills. All useful labour ought to bring in the same and adequate wages to the labourer. Till that time comes, the least that should be done is to see that every labourer gets enough to feed and clothe himself and the family.'[24]

To improve the lot of the labourer his first step was to lay claims to a minimum living wage. A worker must be paid enough to support a family of four to six members, to see to their proper housing, sanitation, to provide them with a balanced diet; in a word to help them to live a human life.[25] The minimum wage may vary from state to state,[26] but the principle admits of no mitigation. 'We must have more wages, we must have less work, because we want clean houses, clean bodies, clean minds and a clean soul, and both are essential for this fourfold cleanliness.'[27] And as for those employees who cannot afford to grant such wages, he said they had better close their shops.'[28]

The general principle of Gandhi evidenced another application when he insisted on the rights of labour in production. Here too his persuasive mind could marshal many advantages when he asked the proprietors to take labour to be on an equal footing with capital. They would then supplement each other,[29] work as mutual trusteess[30], and bring about a healthy and advantageous family spirit.[31] But again he was keen enough to place the insistance on the right and dignity of labour. He told the employers: 'What I expect of you therefore is that you hold all your riches as a trust to be used solely in the interest of those who sweat for you, and to whose industry and labour you owe all your position and prosperity. I want you to make your labourers co-part-

24. *Harijan*, 9 June 1946.
25. Cf. *Harijan*, 31 August 1935,
26. *Harijan*, 12 December 1929.
27. *Young India*, 28 April 1920.
28. *Harijan*, 31 August 1935.
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29. *Young India*, 20 August 1925.
30. *Harijan*, 25 June 1938.
31. *Young India*, 20 August 1925.

ners of your wealth.'[32]

Time and again he asserted the labourers' right 'as part-proprietors'[33] 'In my opinion the mill-hands are as much the proprietors of their mills as the share holders. . . .'[34] Gandhi was not afraid to accept the revolutionary conclusions the logic of his doctrine would dictate to him. Therefore he urged the workers 'to insist on their rights, and even to demand the proper use by their employers of the manufactures in which they have had such an important hand'.[35] And fearlessness he concluded: 'If then labourers are co-equal owners, their organisation should have the same access to the transactions of the mills as the share holders.'[36] He taught them too the means to realise their claims, as for example when he reminded them that 'strikes are an inherent right of the working man'.[37]

Summing up, we might say that in Gandhi's tireless efforts towards economic equality one point stands out clearly. It was particularly on behalf of the neglected masses that he got himself involved in social welfare work. He saw that physical and circumstantial disabilities had made them submit dumbly to the exploiters who preyed on their rights as men. That was an occasion for him to stress emphatically every man's right to the proper means of living. It may not imply a mathematical equality either in our opportunities for growth or in the distribution of the earth's produce. But it does imply an equitable and just distribution which can be had for instance in trusteeship. Again it does demand human conditions of work and at least a minimum living wage for the labourer. And at length it logically leads to the conclusion that even a poor labourer is co-equal with the manager of the factory.

This bespeaks what dignity Gandhi thought accrues to even the humblest of men just because he is a man. The lowest man

32. *Young India*, 10 May 1928.
33. *Harijan*, 2 February 1934.
34. *Young India*, 4 August, 1927.
35. *Young India*, 16 February 1921.
36. *Harijan*, 13 February 1937.
37. *Harijan*, 3 July 1937.

in society has rights and therefore a dignity equal to that of the highest. He possesses a human nature which in Gandhi's eyes should never suffer in dignity.

Social Equality

If Gandhi had to be consistent with his principle of the intrinsic and equal worth of every human being, which was implied in his fight for economic equality, he had to, as he did, fight as well for social equality in an Indian society which in many aspects had unjustly ignored it. He was driven by the basic conviction that no man can claim superiority just by his birth. It is the equality of the human rights derived from one common Father whom we have in God that postulates a social equality among men. And due to his persuasion he threw himself headlong into the struggle for social justice. This struggle was specially seen in his efforts to reinstate the Indian woman in her rightful position, and to purge the scourge of untouchability from India's soil.

But at the outset it must be said that as in his ideal of economic equality, here too Gandhi was too much of a realist to rule out every difference in social status. As he admitted some inequalities in property and opportunities, so too he saw the necessity of a social hierarchy. 'We own no master but Daridranarayana, and if for the time being we own human superiors, we do so voluntarily, well knowing that no organisation can be carried on without discipline. Discipline presupposes an organising head. He is only the first among equals. He is there on sufferance. But whilst he is there, he is entitled to the whole-hearted allegiance and uncompromising obedience of all the fellow servants.'[38] Though this was said in connection with some 'humanitarian services' there is no doubt that *mutatis mutandis* it well expresses the social aspect of his philosophy.

Coming to the positive meaning of his social equality he says, 'I do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated.

38. *Harijan*, 22 June 1935.

I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. The *Gita* teaches us that the members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same *dharma* for the brahmin as for the bhangi. But it insists that the latter should be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning.'[39]

This equality derives from 'God, who is the creator of all.'[40] 'All are one in the eyes of God', and so He, 'the Father in heaven will deal with us all with even-handed justice'.[41] Therefore, 'there cannot be greater ignorance than this; birth and observance of forms cannot determine one's superiority or inferiority. Character is the only determining factor. God did not create men with the badge of superiority or inferiority, and no scripture which labels a human being as inferior or untouchable, because of his or her birth, can command our allegiance. It is a denial of God and of Truth which is God.'[42]

From this it was but one step to conclude that all human labour is essentially of the same stamp. 'I do not regard a bhangi's [duties] as in any sense of a lower order [than any].'[43] Indeed the scavenger's 'occupation is as honourable as that of lawyers or government servants'.[44] So comming to the very essence of the thing we can say that Gandhi held that man's essential dignity, which he has in common with all men, derives neither from his birth nor his occuption but from his very human nature, which thus entitles him to all basic human rights and to an undiscriminating justice.

Dignity of Womanhood

This led Gandhi to work for the restoration of the status of

39. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, p. 19.
40. M.K. Gandhi, *Women and Social Justice*, p. 183.
41. *Young India*, 6 August 1931.
42. *Harijan*, 31 August 1934.
43. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, p. 18.
44. Address at the Suppressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, 13 and 14 April 1921.

India's womanhood which had deteriorated appallingly in a degenerating society. He pointed out gross violations of the dignity of a woman veiled under customs and traditions. He asserted repeatedy woman's equal rights with man. And marvellously he succeeded in lifting to some extent the degrading burden placed unjustly on the Indian woman.

Custom in India had widely justified in making the woman subordinate to man in a wrong sense. Gandhi revolted against it: 'By sheer force of vicious custom even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.'[45]

Illiteracy, he pointed out, is no justification for the denial of their 'equal andn atural rights'[46] as human beings. He pointed an accusing finger at 'the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected' in being, for instance, incapacitated to inherit anything.[47] 'The root of the evil lies much deeper than most people realise. It lies in man's greed of power and fame, and deeper still in mutual lust . . .'[48] 'She should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man.'[49]

What came in for real scathing remarks from him was the positive ill-treatment of women. 'We know by painful experience of what is daily happening in India, that there are husbands enough who regard their wives as their property like their cattle or household furniture, and therefore think they have the right to beat them as they would their cattle.'[50] 'Brutal husbands' he termed them.[51] 'More often than not the woman's time is taken up, not by the performance of essential domestic duties, but catering for the egoistic pleasures of her lord and master. . . . To me this slavery of woman is a symbol of our barbarism. . . . It is high time that our womankind was freed from this incu-

45. Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Young India*, 17 October 1929.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Harijan*, 3 October 1929.
51. *Young India*, 3 October 1929.

bus.'[52] He blamed Hindu culture for this. 'Excessive subordination of the wife to the husband. . . . This has resulted in the husband sometimes usurping and exercising authority that reduces him to the level of the beast.'[53]

Similarly Gandhi lashed mercilessly against some evil customs in Indian society, such as child marriage, dowry and purdah. 'It is irreligion not religion to give religious sanction to a brutal custom'[54] he said of the evils of child marriage. He even defied the Hindu scriptures when they gave sanction to it. 'The Smritis bristle with contradictions', he said.[55] The health of the race, the morality of the children involved and so many other reasons, he said, would induce us to hold it as 'sinful' to give children in marriage. In this connection he time and again spoke against it by drawing on his own experience and also on the appalling statistics he had before him of its consequent evils. He was outspoken against forced marriages and forced widowhood, especially of teenage widowhood. Of course he was all for 'voluntary widowhood . . . which adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself'.[56] But he could not bear the 'enormity of the wrong done to the Hindu girl widows. . . . Widowhood imposed by the religion or custom is an unbearable yoke, and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion',[57] especially when widowhood is so common in child marriages. Besides it makes one 'lose sight of elementary justice'.[58]

No less was he outspoken on the question of dowry and purdah. The system of dowry for him 'was nothing but the sale of girls'.[59] Speaking of the evils of dowry, for instance disposing of young children to old men by needy parents, Gandhi accused the community of committing 'a double sin'.[60] 'Any

52. *Harijan*, 8 June 1940.
53. *Young India*, 3 October 1929.
54. *Young India*, 26 August 1926.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Young India*, 5 August 1925.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Young India*, 11 November 1926.
59. *Harijan*, 16 March 1947.
60. *Young India*, 6 October 1927.

young man who makes dowry a condition for marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood.'[61]

He waged war also on the system of purdah. Refuting the charge that it was meant to protect the chastity of women, he said: 'Chastity is not a hothouse growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the purdah. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be as defiant as Sita's. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their womenfolk even as the latter are compelled to trust them.'[62] In 1927 he spoke against the purdah saying: 'It pained and humiliated me deeply. I thought of the wrong done by men to the women of India, by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country.'[63] His campaign bore fruit and in 1942 he could happily write: 'The days of the purdah are gone for good.'[64]

There are many other fields in which Gandhi tried to uphold the dignity of the woman. Thus for example he continually railed against obscene literature which had reached 'an altogether wrong apotheosis' of women, thus degrading their nature.[65] He did his best to counteract the practice of prostitution which he called 'a life of shame',[66] a life of 'debasing indulgeuence',[67] against which 'curse' he hoped 'humanity will rise'.[68] So too he pitted himself against the protagonists of contraceptives who asked the Indian woman to violate 'the sacredness of her body'.[69]

61. *Young India*, 21 June 1928.
62. *Young India*, 3 February 1927.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Harijan*, 8 March 1942.
65. *Harijan*, 21 November 1936.
66. *Yaung India*, 26 June 1925.
67. *Young India*, 9 July 1925.
68. *Young India*, 28 May 1928.
69. *Harijan*, 2 May 1936.

Behind all his holy zeal there lay the implicit conviction that women are as much human as men and hence they must enjoy perfect equality of rights pertaining to human nature as such. He said: 'I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man.'[70] He emphasised the point repeatedly 'She has the right to participate in the minutest detail of the activity of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he.'[71]

'Man and woman are equal in status, but are not identical. They are a peerless pair being complementary to one another . . . '[72] Of course he admitted the 'point of bifurcation' in them. Thus he said: 'Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocation of the two must be also different.'[73] The woman by vocation is destined to rear children. And it would be wrong to forsake that work altogether for another.[74] But what Gandhi fought for is that 'she is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his '[75] and man is unjust in denying her that right.

Gandhi did succeed in bringing back honour to India's womanhood. He asked them to 'forget that they belong to the weaker sex'[76]; he convinced them that 'the economic and moral salvation of India' rested mainly on them. 'The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation.'[77] He drew away thousands of them into his political campaign; scores of hundreds answered his call to the satyagraha and swadeshi drive; they lived up to his definition of woman—'embodiment of sacrifice and suffering'[78]—by giving their all to fight for truth

70. *Young India*, 17 October 1929.
71. Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
72. *Ibid*
73. *Harijan*, 24 February 1940.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj, 20 February 1918.
76. *Young India*, 14 January 1932.
77. *Young India*, 11 August 1921.
78. *Young India*, 17 October 1929.

with him. The fearlessness they displayed and their capacity to 'work wonders on behalf of the motherland'[79], redounded in getting back to a large extent the honour and dignity that had increasingly been denied them in modern Indian society.

Fight for Harijans

The fight on behalf of women was one part of his fight for social justice; the fight on behalf of the untouchables another. He spoke against the practice of untouchability with all his might and main. He tried to convince people of its unreasonableness. And characteristically he staked his life to bring social equality to them.

Gandhi marshalled all his fund of vehemence to breach the wall of prejudice that guarded the unjust tradition of untouchability. 'I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism', he said.[80] 'A hideous doctrine', he called it, 'a curse that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism'.[81] It was for him 'a sin', an excrescence to be removed by every effort',[82] 'a heinous crime against humanity',[83] 'social leprosy',[84] 'a hydra-headed monster',[85] poison in Hinduism 'as a drop of arsenic in milk',[86] and so on. Such language from a man so meek and mild points to the deep feelings Gandhi had against untouchability.

But it must be said that for Gandhi untouchability was not synonymous with caste. At least for him caste 'simply means the following on the part of us all of the hereditary and traditional calling of our fore-fathers, in so far as that traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only

79. *Young India*, 11 August 1921.
80. Address to the Supressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, 13 and 14 April 1921.
81. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound* p. 46.
82. *Young India*, 27 October 1920.
83. *Young India*, 8 December 1920.
84. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, p. 46.
85. *Ibid*, p. 29.
86. *Ibid*, p. 68.

for the purpose of earning one's livelihood'.[87]

Such casteism 'would limit our material ambition, and our energy would be set free for exploring those vast fields whereby and wherethrough we can know God'.[88] 'It gave the labourer, the Sudra, the same status as the thinker, the Brahmin. It provided for the accentuation of merit and elimination of demerit and it transferred human ambition from the general worldly sphere to the permanent and the spiritual.'[89]

Untouchability on the other hand implied the idea of 'inferiority and superiority' and thus had much more malice in it than its literal meaning would suggest. In this meaning alone Gandhi defended casteism, at least in his early period. For he said: 'If untouchability and caste are convertible terms, the sooner caste perishes the better for all concerned.'[90]

To convince people of the injustice of untouchability he had recourse to many ways of persuasion. For instance he repeatedly told people that we have no right to speak against foreign domination till we rid ourselves of the domination of our own people. 'The curse of foreign domination and the attendant exploitation is the justest retribution meted out by God to us for our exploitation of a sixth of our own race and their studied degradation in the sacred name of religion.'[91]

He allied this argument with the argument of swaraj; 'Without the removal of the taint swaraj is a meaningless term. . . . I consider the removal of untouchability as a most powerful factor in the process of attainment of swaraj.'[92]

He even said it is 'essential' to it.[93] And at another time he declared: 'There seems to be a lurking thought with many of us that we can gain swaraj and keep untouchability. They do not even see the contradiction inherent in the thought.'[94]

87. *Ibid*, p. 62.
88. *Ibid*, p. 63.
89. *Ibid*, p. 78-79.
90. *Young India*, 25 March 1926.
91. *Young India*, 13 October 1921.
92. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, p. 2.
93. *Ibid*, p. 25.
94. *Ibid*, p. 3.

The contradiction is evident if we consider the definition of swaraj given by Gandhi. 'Swaraj is synonymous with Ram Raj—the establishment of the kingdom of Righteousness on earth.'[95]

But above all Gandhi put forward the argument from reason, the argument of social equality. 'Untouchability is repugnant to reason and to their instinct of mercy, pity or love.'[96] It is a 'heinous crime against humanity'[97] and ought to be fought on all fronts. And such a fight 'is a fight for the recognition of human dignity'.[98] He could not understand how one could 'accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or bhangi, who worships the same God . . . .'[99] and when 'all are one in the eyes of God'.[100] So he pleaded for equality 'in the eye of the law, in the matter of elementary human rights even as, irrespective of caste, race, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, *e.g.* hunger, thirst, etc.'[101]

Defining his aim he said: 'You must have the right to worship in any temple in which the members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of untouchability.''[102]

For this removal of untouchability Gandhi took every means possible and even did not hesitate to stake life for it. He called the untouchable by a new name, 'Harijan', the children or people of God. He bade Harijans to come and live in his Ashram as members of one family among people drawn from

95. Address to the Suppressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, April 1921.
96. *Young India*, 12 October 1921.
97. *Young India*, 8 December. 1920.
98. *Young India*, 5 February 1925.
99. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding wound*, p. 20.
100. *Young India*. 6 August 1931.
101. M.K. Gandhi, *The Bleeding Wound*, p. 20.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

all castes. He adopted a Harijan girl. He encouraged other caste members to marry Harijans. 'I therefore tell all the boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties is a Harijan.'[103]

'I have more than once staked my all for their sake', Gandhi wrote to Sir Samual Hoare, Secretary of State for India, announcing the epic fast he was about to undertake for the sake of the untouchables.[104] His fast unto death against the 'Communal Award' in 1932 was 'to resist your [British] decision with my life',[105] which 'does not protect them [the Harijans] or the Hindu society in general from being disrupted'.[106] The fast had an electric effect. It caused a 'religious-emotional upheaval' in India.[107] 'A spirit of reform, penance and self-purification swept the land.'[108] Hundreds of temples flung their doors open to Harijans. Roads and streets, schools and wells, hotels and holy places lowered their bars against Harijans. In a spirit of penance many refrained from going to theatres, restaurants etc. At the orthodox Benares University the Principal with many other Brahmins dined publicly with street cleaners, cobblers and scavengers. And that was certainly not a stray case. The Mahatma had dealt a well calculated death blow to untouchability and it was certainly doomed to perish.

In retrospect, we see that for Gandhi neither birth nor occupation essentially differentiates one man from another, because it is one and the same human nature that is participated in by every human being which brings with it human rights and human dignity, though it does not necessarily postulate an absolute mathematical social equality. Among other things this Gandhian conviction was seen in his heroic struggle on behalf of India's

103. *Hindustan Standard,* 5 January 1946.
104. Letter dated 11 March 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
105. Gandhi's letter to the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, dated 18 August 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
106. Gandhi's letter to Ramsay McDonald, dated 9 September 1932, Yerawda Central Prison.
107. L. Fischer, *Life of Mahatma Gandhi,* 346.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

women and untouchables whom he declared to be equal to any other human being as far as they are endowed with both human nature and dignity.

The one conclusion which obviously flows from all this is that the dignity that Gandhi attached to human nature was really very lofty. Neither age-old customs nor religious sanctions can justify any one's looking down on another human person even in the slightest way. If man is man he has a unique claim for deep respect for the inviolable dignity of his nature.

Four Questions on Gandhi's Philosophy: an Attempt at their Answers

S. M. TEWARI

I

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is the science of questions as well as the art of attempting their possible answers also. And Gandhi's philosophy is no exception to this rule. It is, in fact, nothing if not a series of contradictions, queries and questions which, in their turn, have provoked counter questions from his thinking successors, from all those who are seriously engaged in the study, teaching and research of Gandhi's philosophy in the post-Gandhian era. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Editor of *Gandhi Marg* should have invited the exponents as well as the opponents of his thought, especially when the Master is no more to reply his critics, to answer four fundamental questions on Gandhi's philosophy. I, too, claim to be an earnest student of his thought.

These four questions, 'What is the fulcrum of the Gandhian teaching? What are its sources? Why has it shown signs of decline in recent years? Above all, of its two key concepts of "truth" and "nonviolence", which may be said to be the crux?', respectively deal with the four facets of Gandhi's philosophy: (1) Religion, (2) History, (3) Sociology, and (4) Metaphysics-cum-Ethics. It is not possible to answer them once and for all, because all answers are the products of dialogue with time, place and circumstance. They are not absolute and final, and therefore change with the alterations of historical perspective. Even so, I hope my article, with all its defects and deficiencies, will help the readers of *Gandhi Marg* in some small measure in having approximate answers to the said controversial questions,

in loosening the knotty nature of Gandhi's philosophy, and finally in pointing out the quiz and crux of it all.

It may not be given to us to see that the questions are absolutely answered; but it is given to us to endeavour that they should. I shall, therefore, try for the impossible in order to realize whatever is possible.[1]

II

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS TNE FULCRUM OF THE GANDHIAN TEACHING?

A. *Religion as the Fulcrum of Gandhi's Teaching*. The fulcrum of Gandhi's teaching (I prefer not to call it the Gandhian teaching) is 'Religion'. It is the root of which his philosophy or teaching is the fruit. Religion is experience of Reality which is larger than any system of theology, however large.[2] Experience is not limited to the data of perception or introspection. It embraces paranormal phenomena and spiritual states. Religious experience precedes ethical expression (instruction) or moral teaching, realization precedes conceptualization, base precedes apex, practice precedes theory, precept or preaching. Gandhi himself says: 'Man without religion is man without roots. Therefore, religion is the basis on which the life structure has to be erected, if it is to be real.'[3] Again: 'No man can live without religion. There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But it is like a man saying that he breathes but that he has no nose. Whether by reason, or by instinct, or by superstition, man acknowledges some sort of relationship with the divine. . . . That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot and does not

1. Cf. Gandhi: 'Modern Science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory.'—*The Law of Love*, p. 4, edited by Anand T. Hingorani, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1962).
2. Radhakrishnan: *Religion and Culture*, pp. 16-17, Delhi, Hind Pocket Books (1968).
3. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 311, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1961).

live without religion.'[4] Again: 'This is the maximum of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has religious backing.'[5] Hence we see that religion, the passion to see God face to face, is the pivot on which Gandhi's life and teaching revolve. Dr. Radhakrishnan supports my view-point when he writes: 'The inspiration of Gandhi's life has been what is commonly called religion.[6] Professor B.G. Ray also observes: 'The key to Gandhi's life and philosophy is religion.'[7] Bharatan Kumarappa is of the same view when he states: 'Religion was the mainspring of Gandhi's activities.'[8] From all these authentic opinions, it is now crystal clear that religion is the basis, the inspiration, the key, the mainspring, the master passion of Gandhi's life, teaching and activities. That is why he could live without anything and everything except his faith in God, the highest object of religious consciousness.[9] Gandhi himself confesses: 'I may live without air and water but not without Him. You

4. *My Religion*, pp. 3-4, by M.K. Gandhi; see also p. 86. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1958). Cp. Blake: 'Man must and will have some religion. If he has not the religion of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan, and will erect the synagogue of Satan, calling the Prince of this world God and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the name of God.'—Jerusalem, pp. 52-53. Cp. Radhakrishnan: 'The need for religion, for a system of thought, for devotion to a cause which will give our fragile and fugitive existence significance and value does not require much elaborate argument. It is an intrinsic element of human nature. The question is, what kind of religion? Is it a religion of love and brotherhood or of power and hate? Secular ideologies ask us to worship wealth and comfort, class or nation. The question is therefore not, religion or no religion, but what kind of religion?'—*Religion and Culture* p. 8.

5. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 177, compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, Madras, Oxford University Press (1946).

6. *Great Indians*, p. 52. Bombay, Hind Kitabs Limited (1946).

7. *Contemporary Indian Philosophers*, p. 82. Alllahabad, Kitabistan (1947).

8. Quoted from Editor's Note to *My Religion* p. iii.

9. Cf. E.H. Bradley: 'The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness, seeks he does not know what,'—*Appearance and Reality*, p, 398. London, Oxford University Press (1946).

may pluck out my eyes, but that cannot kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God, and I am dead.'[10] God is Gandhi's life of life,[11] the breath of his very breath, the elan vital of his being, and therefore religion is the core of his teaching, the kernel of his doing, the juice and joy of his living.

Thus we come to the convincing conclusion that religion is the support, the basis, the background, the nucleus, the centre, the fulcrum, the prop and the pivot of Gandhi's teaching.

B. *Gandhi's concept of Religion*. After having ascertained the fulcrum of Gandhi's teaching, now the next question that arises out of the first premise is: What is Gandhi's view of religion? We can understand it easily and precisely, too, by knowing its meaning. Hence we shall begin with it.

1. *Meaning*: In order to explain Gandhi's meaning of religion systematically, it is better to divide it into two sets of meanings: (a) general meanings, and (b) particular meanings. I shall now elucidate and examine both of them one by one separately.

(a) *General Meanings*. The general meanings of Gandhi's religion may be divided into two parts: (i) What Religion is not and (ii) What Religion is. Let us analyse them respectively.

(i) *What Religion Is Not*. In clarifying the meaning of religion, Gandhi follows the Upanishadic technique, the negative method (not this, not this) by stating what it is not. He himself says:

1. 'By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion.'[12]

2. 'Religion does not mean sectarianism.'[13]

3. 'Religion does not mean merely offering one's namaz or going to the temple.'[14]

10. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 31.

11. Cp. Tagore: 'Life of My Life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.'—*Gitanjali*, 4. London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd. (1946).

12. *My Religion*, p. 3.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 192, edited by N.B. Sen. New Delhi, New Book Society of India (1960). Cp. Tagore: 'Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in

4. 'By religion, I do not mean Hindu religion.'[15]

5. 'Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains.'[16]

6. 'Religion is not really what is grasped by the brain.'[17]

7. 'Religion is not what you will get after reading all the scriptures of the world.'[18]

8. 'God who is the embodiment of Truth and Right, and Justice, could never have sanctioned a religion or practice which regards a fifth of our vast population as untouchables. I want you, therefore, to rid yourselves of this monstrous notion. It is not religion, but the grossest species of irreligion.'[19]

9. 'Religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion.'[20]

10. 'To see the universal and all pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and *I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics* do not know what religion means.'[21]

By examining these negative statements, we feel sure that religion, according to Gandhi, is neither subscription to dogmas nor conformity to rites and rituals. Nehru makes this assurance doubly sure when he says: 'Gandhi's conception of religion had

this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thy eyes and see thy God is not before thee!' *Gitanjali*, II. Cp. Swami Vivekananda: 'Temples and Churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take higher steps . . . Religion, is not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming, and it is realization.'

15. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
18. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 178.
19. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 192
20. *My Religion*, p. 4.
21. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 22.

nothing to do with any dogma or custom or ritual.'[22] Gandhi does not mean by religion mere counting of beads or mechanically uttering the name of God, Isvara or Allah. Religion is no sophistry, pride, pedantry. Nor is it an intellectual exhibition, a display of argumentative faculty, or parade of logic to him. By religion, Gandhi does not mean this or that religion, a denominational faith, a sect or a creed. His conception of religion is neither narrow nor communal nor customary.

For Gandhi, religion does not mean mere scriptural study, svadhyaya. One may read and read scriptures, and yet be a villain and wicked. The practice of untouchability is no religion to him either. By religion Gandhi does not mean indifference to the world[23] or practical affairs and actions.[24] He does not at all believe in separating the things of God from those of Caesar's,[25] Finally, religion, for Gandhi, never means exclusion of politics from its fold.[26] On this issue he has not even the least hesitation; he is fully convinced, he is as sure as death.

(ii) *What Religion is.* Now we shall study Gandhi's positive statements about his view of religion, what religion is. What does Gandhi mean by the world 'religion'? He himself replies:

1. 'The term "religion" I am using in its broadest sense, meaning thereby self-realization or knowledge of self.'[27]

2. 'Religion means knowledge of one's self and knowledge of God.'[28]

22. Quoted in *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 14.
23. Cf. Gandhi: 'I must try to live in society and yet remain untouched by its pitfalls.'—*In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 308.
24. Cf. Gandhi: 'Religion should pervade every one of our actions.'—*Ibid.*
25. *The New Testament*: 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.' —Quoted in *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 323.
26. Cf. Gandhi: 'For me there is no politics without religion, not the religion of the superstitious and the blind religion that hates and fights, but the universal religion of toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided.'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 174.
27 *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 23. Ahmedabad Navajivan Publishing House (1959).
28. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 192.

3. 'Religion means being bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath.'[29]

4. 'By religion, I mean that which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker.'[30]

5. 'Religion means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hiuduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.'[31]

6. 'Let us explain what I mean by religion. It is that which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.'[32]

7. 'Religion deals with the science of the soul.'[33]

8. 'Religion is a heart-grasp.'[34]

9. 'The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole; you cannot divide social, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity.'[35]

10. 'You must watch my life, how I live, eat, sit, talk, behave in general. The sum total of all those in me is my religion.'[36]

11. 'Because the existence of the world in a broad sense depends on religion, the ultimate definition of religion may be said to be obedience to the Law of God. God and his Law are synonymous terms.'[37]

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29. *My Religion*, p. 4.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 194.
34. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 178.
35. Quoted in *Great Indians*, p. 54, by S, Radhakrishnan.
36. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 254, edited by Nirmal Kumar Bose. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1957).
37. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 194.

After taking into account Gandhi's different meanings, we come to the conclusion that religion is the science of the soul (metaphysics, as opposed to the science of matter, physics) and God. It is also the art of union between the two. Religion, in the opinion of Gandhi, is a friend of liberalism and a foe to fanaticism. It is conquest of passion and quest for compassion. Religion means man's equation with his Maker. It is to become what he is. By religion, Gandhi means to cognize the self (atman), to recognize the cosmic self (paramatman), to realize Reality, to see God face to face, to attain moksha through service to man,[38] It is union between man and man, and communion with the Divine. 'Religion binds man to God and man to man.'[39] It is a cohesive force and not a disintegrating power.

Religion according to Gandhi, is the Law (dharma) which sustains the Universe, the principle of a thing by virtue of which it is what it is. And this Law is God Himself. There is perfect identity between God and His Law. 'He and his law are one.'[40] Religion is not accessible to dry reasoning, to mere thinking, to intellect which cribs, cabins and confines Reality. It is essentially a matter of feeling,[42] feeling not in the sense of raw emotion, but feeling in the sense of sublime sentiment.

For Gandhi, there is no religion apart from human activity. Every activity—be it social, political or economic—is a sacrament. Religion is all or nothing. If we do not see God everywhere, we see Him nowhere. Religion is the concern of one's entire life, from getting up early in the morning to going to bed late at night, from spirituality to diplomacy, from prayer to politics. In the eyes of Gandhi, which is also the eye of religion,

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38. Gandhi: 'I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one.'—*Truth is God*, p. 5, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1959).
39. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 191.
40. Gandhi: 'The Law is God.'—*Truth is God*, p. 20.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Gandhi: 'Religion is a matter of the heart.'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 193.

life is all of a piece. P.B. Sharga rightly remarks: 'Religion to Gandhi is the reaction of his whole being to the whole reality, the search for Truth by the totality of his faculties and energies.'[43] Religion is a ceaseless search for Truth, which is God, through our entire personality—our blood, brain and being.

Gandhi took to politics knowing it to be a branch of religion.[44] 'You must understand that I cannot isolate politics from the deepest things of my life, for the simple reason that my politics are not corrupt, they are inextricably bound up with Nonviolence and Truth.'[45] In fact, religion and politics are one in the dictionary of Gandhi. William Blake holds the same view: 'Religion is politics; and politics is brotherhood.'[46] Brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God are the two dialects of the one language of religion.

(b) *Particular Meanings*. The particular meanings of Gandhi's religion may be divided into two parts: (i) Truth and Nonviolence Together, and (ii) Truth Alone. I shall now explain each one of them briefly.

(i) *Truth and Nonviolence Together*. The word 'religion' is quite general, abstract and implicit in meaning, and therefore capable of being misunderstood. Hence Gandhi makes its meaning particular and specific, concrete and explicit. He himself says: 'In order therefore to protect myself against any misunderstanding I have said Truth and Nonviolence is my creed.'[47] Arithmetically speaking, Gandhi's religion is equal to truth plus nonviolence (R=T+N). To use the language of logic, it is a genus of which truth and nonviolence are the species. Of the

43. *Gandhi*, Vol. I.P. 4. by P. Brijnath Sharga. Lucknow, The Upper India Publishing House Ltd. (1932).
44. Cp. Radhakrishnan: 'If Gandhi took to politics, it is because he looked upon politics as a branch of ethics and religion.'—*Great Indians*, p. 54. Again, Radhakrishnan: 'Politics is a branch of ethics. That is Aristotle. That is Gandhi.'—*Is This Peace*?, p. 68. Bombay, Hind Kitabs Limited (1950).
45. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 174.
46. Quoted in Radhakrishnan's *Is This Peace?*, p. 3.
47. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 4. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1950).

general term dharma (religion), satya (truth) and ahimsa (nonviolence) are the two particular meanings. Gandhi would put it like this: 'Of the single coin of religion, truth and nonviolence are the two faces.'

We may, therefore, say that religion means truth and nonviolence both. This is the first particular meaning of religion.

(ii) *Truth Alone*. The second particular meaning of religion is truth, only truth, nothing but truth, Gandhi himself says: 'I often describe my religion as the Religion of Truth.'[48] By religion, Gandhi means truth, without any before and after. He does not know any religion apart from truth. That is why he says with conviction: 'There is no religion other than truth.'[49] Truth alone is religion; everything else is irreligion.

It is only in this particular sense we may also say that the fulcrum of Gandhi's teaching is truth, which includes nonviolence too. This is why Gandhi himself says: 'To me religion means truth and ahimsa or rather truth alone, because truth includes ahimsa, ahimsa being the necessary and indispensable means for its discovery.'[50] Truth is Gandhi's religion and ahimsa is the only way of its realizaion.[51]

We may. therefore, say that religion means truth alone.

III

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF GANDHI'S TEACHING?

Gandhi's teaching is very complex, complicated and comprehensive. So are its sources. They are many, varied and even

48. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 21, edited by S. Radhakrishnan and J.H. Muirhead, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. (1958).
49. *All Men Are Brothers*, p. 95. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1960).
50. Quoted in Joan V. Bondurant's *Conquest of Violence*, p. 110. Bombay, Oxford University Press (1959). Cf. Gandhi: 'I often feel that ahimsa is in truth, not vice-versa. Out of truth emerges love and tenderness.'—Quoted in *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, p. 33, January, 1969. New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation. Again, Gandhi: 'Nonviolence is contained in Truth.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 153.
51. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 163.

baffling in nature. As the end so would be the means. A teacher like Gandhi could not be the product of a single or simple influence. He embodied in himself the wisdom of the whole world. Gandhi himself says: 'I have learnt from the New Testament, as also from other sources.'[52] His teaching drew its inspiration from the sages of almost all lands and ages.

The main sources of Gandhi's teaching may roughly be divided into three parts: A. Authority. B. Reason, and C. Experience. I shall now describe, explain and examine them one by one.

A. *Authority*. The first source of Gandhi's teaching is *Authority*, which implies power to influence opinion and induce belief. This power may be exercised by an individual, object or institution held in great veneration and esteem; for example, the authority of our parents and teachers, the scriptures, religious institutions etc.

For the sake of clarity and convenience, I shall divide *Authority* into three sets of sources: 1. Indian Sources, 2. Western Sources, and 3. Perso-Semitic sources,

1. *Indian Sources*. To begin with, I shall take into consideration the influences of the country, the family, the environment and education. In no other country of the world has the tradition of religion (of truth and nonviolence) been so deep-rooted and continuous as in India, which alone could give brith to Gandhi. It is not for nothing that the editorial in the London *Times* on the day after his death said: 'No country but India and no religion but Hinduism could have given birth to a Gandhi.'[53] The greatest contribution of Greece is civics, of Italy law, of Germany metaphysics, of France politics, of England economics, of America commerce. But what is India's greatest gift to the world? Dharma (religion). Gandhi learnt the A.B.C. of religion, which was destined to become the fulcrum of his teach-

52. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 323. Cp. Professor D.M. Datta: 'A variety of experiences gradually shaped Gandhi's ideas'.—*The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 3. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press (1953).

53. *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 5. edited by S. Radhakrishnan. London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. (1949).

ing, from his motherland and said with confidence: 'India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world.'[54] 'I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for all the world. . . . my religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to the services of India through the religion of nonviolence'.[55] As the country, so will be her citizens. If she is religious, they will be spiritual.

Gandhi was born in a family that followed the traditional theistic faith, Vaishnavism, which enjoins the worship of God as the Supreme Person endowed with all auspicious qualities. He grew up in this religious atmosphere, pulsating with love, devotion and dedication to the Divine. Here the existence of God was beyond all doubts, disputes and denials. It is easy to see how these surroundings must have had a strong effect on the young boy who became the greatest religious man of his age. Influences and impressions formed in the early years of a child are formed for ever. Gandhi was influenced most by the devotional temperament of his mother, Putlibai. He himself admits; 'The outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. She was deeply religious.[56] From the leaf of her spiritual life. Putlibai taught her son the alpha of religion and 'common sense',[57] which is the realized sense of proportion.[58] Every home is a school and mother is the first teacher. From his father, Kaba Gandhi, Mohandas inherited a 'rich experience of practical affairs',[59] which stood him in good stead in the solution of the most intricate questions and in managing thousands of men. It is this inheritance which also made his religion intensely practical and himself a 'practical idealist'[60] of the highest

54. *India of My Dreams*, p. 3. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1962).

55. *Ibid.*, p.4.

56. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p, 4.

57. Cf. Gandhi: 'My mother had strong commonsense.'—*Ibid.*

58. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 55.

59. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 4.

60. Cf. Gandhi: 'I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist.' —*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 48.

order. Gandhi learnt from his nurse, Rambha, many current sacred names of God, particularly Rama, which he was taught to recite whenever in difficulty.[61] A truly great man is one who learns even from small people, from his peon, servant and sweeper.

While at school, Gandhi never told a lie either to his teacher or to his class-mates.[62] Telling a lie is an act of irreligion, a breach of truth. From the very beginning he began to show signs of a moral and religious genius, though intellectually an average student. Intellectual giants are seldom spiritual geniuses. Gandhi writes: 'My own recollection is that I had not any high regard for my ability. I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from my eyes.'[63] Morning shows the day. There is an incident which occurred at the examination during Gandhi's first year at the High School, which gives us an insight into his love of truth and dislike for copying. 'Of all duties, the love of truth, with faith and constancy in it, ranks first and highest (Silvio Pellico).'[64] Mr Giles, the Educational Inspector, had come on a visit of inspection. He had set five words to write as a spelling exercise. One of the words was 'kettle'. Gandhi mis-spelt it. His teacher tried to prompt him, but he refused to copy. To refuse to use foul means for a fair end is a moral act, an act of truth, which is the highest religion (law).[65] Gandhi himself says: "There is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness.'[66]

61. *My Religion*, p. 6.
62. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 5.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
64. Quoted in *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. zero, by M.K. Gandhi, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1945).
65. The word 'dharma' is used in two senses: one in the sense of 'law'; the other in the sense of 'duty'. Truth is the highest law (dharma); nonviolence is the highest duty (dharma). The former is the metaphysical word; the latter is an ethical term. See *Hindu Dharma*, p. 3. for Gandhi's opinion.
66. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 254, Cp. The *Mahabharata*: 'There is no religion greater than truth, *satyannasti paro dharmah*.'

Two other incidents belonging to the same period clung to Gandhi's memory for ever. The first was in the shape of a book on *Sravana Pitabhakti Nataka* (a play about Sravana's devotion to his parents). 'The agonised lament of the parents over Sravana's death', he writes, 'is still fresh in my memory.'[67] To react to every wrong, to every anguish, to every agony is the basic trait of a religious man, of an awakened person, of a sensitive soul, of a suffering spirit. Like Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Gandhi's religion of nonviolence, which is an epic of suffering, also has its source in lament, especially in the agonised lament of Sravana's parents. The second is connected with another play, *Hariscandra*, which captured Gandhi's heart. ' "Why should not all be truthful like Hariscandra?" was the question I asked myself day and night. To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Hariscandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me.'[68] Gandhi's religion of truth has its source of inspiration in Hariscandra's truthfulness and his suffering for it. To be religious is to be truthful, to practise truth and to suffer for it unto death. Religion is discipline and practice of Truth as God,[69] not theory and discussion, dogma and doctrine thereof.

Early in life Gandhi came to know something about Jainism. He was influenced[70] by the teachings of the Jains, whose adherence to nonviolence towards living creatures reaches the farthest extremes. Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* gave Gandhi a touching impression of the life of Lord Buddha. 'I owe a great deal to the inspiration that I have derived from the life of the Enlightened One.'[71] Both Buddhism and Jainism, which are religions of compassion, lay stress on nonviolence being organ-

67. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. p. 6.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Gandhi: 'Truth is God and untruth a denial of Him.'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 108, Cp. Silvio Pellico: 'Truth is God. To love God and to love truth are one and the same.'—Quoted from *Yeravda Mandir*, p. zero. Cp. Tagore: 'Thou art that Truth.'—*Gitanjali*, 4.
70. *Conquest of Violence*, p. iii, by Joan V. Bondurant.
71. *All Religions are True*, p. 196, by M.K. Gandhi, edited by Anand T. Hingorani. Bombay, Pearl Publications Private Limited (1962).

ically related to truth, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. Like Lord Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi also enjoins good moral habits as being essential for the achievement of the ultimate goal of life, moksa, nirvana or salvation.

Of the books that moulded Gandhi, the *Gita* easily comes first. 'The verses in the second chapter made a deep impression on my mind, and they still ring in my ears. The book struck me as one of priceless worth. The impression has ever since been growing on me, with the result that I regard it today as the book par excellence for the knowledge of truth. It has afforded me invaluable help in my moments of gloom.'[72] He also read the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas, the *Bhagavata*, the *Manusmrti*, the translations of the Upanisads, Max Muller's *India—What Can It Teach Us*?, Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutra*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. 'I have maintained in the teeth of orthodox Hindu opposition that the *Mahabharata* is a book written to establish the futility of war and violence.'[73] War and violence will cease not by conflict and killing but by peace and nonviolence. 'What, however, left a deep impression on me was the reading of the *Ramayana* before my father. . . . Today I regard the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas as the greatest book in all devotional literature.'[74] Its influence on Gandhi is next only to that of the *Gita*.

Gandhi was greatly influenced by the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. His concept of the poor as God, *Daridranarayana*, was later on adopted, elaborated and practised by Gandhi himself. He says: '*Daridranarayana* is one of the millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnamable and unfathomable by human understanding, and it means God of

72. *My Religion*, p. 9.
73. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 146. Cp. Radhakrishnan: 'The great epic of the *Mahabharata* exposes the futility of war by pointing out that the victory of the Pandavas was but a mockery, as only seven persons survived out of the millions who were engaged in that colossal conflict.'—U.N.E.S.C.O., p. 12, Delhi, Old Secretariat, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (1946).
74. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.'[75] The service of the poor is the worship of God. This is also one of the fundamental teachings of Gandhi.

Among his contemporaries, Raichandbhai, a saintly Indian merchant, exercised a profound influence on Gandhi's life. Gandhi says: 'Raichandbhai left a deep impress on my life, and captivated me by his living contact. . . . In my moments of spiritual crisis, therefore, he was my refuge.'[76] But Gandhi could not enthrone him in his heart as his guru. For he believed that 'only a perfect jnani deserves to be enthroned as guru.'[77] The throne, therefore, remained vacant and his search still continued.

Religion is higher than narrow nationalism, petty politics and patriotism. It is the realization of 'one family' on earth without sacrificing truth and nonviolence, without violence and bloodshed. If Gandhi could bring religion and politics nearer to each other, its credit goes to the inspiration of Gokhale. Gandhi says: 'Mr Gokhale taught me that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country, should be not to glorify in language but to spiritualize the political life of the country and the political institutions of the country. He inspired my life and is still inspiring, in that I wish to purify myself and spiritualize myself. I have dedicated myself to that ideal. I may fail, and to what extent I may fail, I call myself to that extent an unworthy disciple of my master.'[78] Gokhale was the first Indian leader to have thought of spiritualizing politics, introducing principles of religion into public life. Gandhi was so much influenced by his political idealism that he accepted him as his 'political guru'. But in spiritual matters, he was sorry to say, he had not yet found any one to whom he could completely surrender himself and whose opinion he could implicitly

75. Quoted from *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 46, compiled and edited by U.S. Mohan Rao, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (1968).
76. *My Religion*, p. 12.
77. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 116.
78. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II pp. 312-13.

and unquestionably accept as he could Gokhale's in politics.[79] For, 'My conception of a guru is perhaps not of the ordinary. Nothing but perfection will satisfy me. I am in search of one who, though in flesh, is incorruptible and unmoved by passion, free from the pairs of opposites, who is truth and ahimsa incarnate and will therefore fear none and be feared by none.'[80] If this be Gandhi's conception of a guru, then God alone could become his guru. For, 'God alone is absolutely perfect.'[81] This is why the 'people of India looked to Nehru, Nehru looked to Gandhi, Gandhi looked to God alone.'[82] God is teacher of teachers. He is also the original source (adisrota) of the teaching of every great teacher of the world, be it Buddha's teaching, Christ's teaching, Mohammed's teaching or Gandhi's teaching.

Thus far I have enumerated, in brief, the main Indian sources. Now it will be my earnest endeavour to take into account the chief Western sources of Gandhi's teaching.

2. *Western Sources.* Gandhi is a true child of the heritage of India in whose cradle he has had the proud privilege of being rocked. There is no doubt about it. But at the same time he is also the heir of that immortal heritage of humanity which 'knows not age or weariness or defeat'. Although the sources of his teaching are thoroughly Indian in origin, the Western influences of great thinkers and prophets, ancient as well as modern, on Gandhi are by no means less important. 'It is a foolish pride that impels some of us to combat all external influences. Every spiritual of scientific advance which any branch of human family achieves is achieved not for itself alone; but for all mankind (Radhakrishnan).'[83] There is no denying the fact which has already been accepted by Gandhi himself. One or two passages from his writings would set all our doubts,

79. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 115.
80. *Ibid.*
81. *Ibid.*, p. 109. See also p. iii.
82. Quoted from *Living Biographies of Religious Leaders*, p. 216, by Henry Thomas and Dana Lee Thomas. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1965).
83. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 115-116. London, Oxford University Press (1940).

denials and disputes at rest. He acknowledges his indebtedness to the West thus: 'I have nothing to be ashamed of if my views on ahimsa are the result of my Western education. I have never tabooed all Western ideas, nor am I prepared to anathematize everything that comes from the West as inherently evil. I have learnt much from the West and I should not be surprised to find if I had learnt something about ahimsa too from the West.'[84] Again: 'I do not think that everything Western is to be rejected. I have condemned Western Civilization in no measured terms. I still do so, but it does not mean that everything Western should be rejected. I have learnt a great deal from the West and I am grateful to it. I should think myself unfortunate if contact with and the literature of the West had no influence on me.'[85].

Among the Western sources of Gandhi's teaching, I shall first of all chronologically begin with Socrates who exercised an incalculable influence on him as a searcher after truth, as a satyagrahi. He says: 'Socrates would not refrain from preaching what he knew to be truth to the Athenian youth, and bravely suffered the punishment of death. He was, in this case, a satyagrahi.'[86] Gandhi admired the moral courage of Socrates who preferred the cup of poison to giving up his pursuit of truth[87]

84. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 223.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
86. See the back flap of *The Science of Satyagraha*, by M.K. Gandhi, and edited by Anand T. Hingorani, Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1962).
87. In words vibrant with conviction and feeling Socrates says: 'If you propose to acquit me on condition that I abandon my search for truth, I will say, "I thank you, O Athenians, but I will obey God, who, as I believe, set me to task, rather than you, and so long as I have breath and strength I will never cease my occupation with philosophy." I will continue the practice of accosting whosoever I meet and saying to him, "Are you not ashamed of setting your heart on wealth and honours while you have no care for wisdom and truth and making your soul better?" I know not what death is—it may be a good thing and I am not afraid of it. But I do know that it is a bad thing to desert one's post, and I prefer what may be good (death) to what I know to be bad (desertion).'—See Bury, *A History af Freedom of Thought* (1913).

and resisting by nonviolent means the superstitious beliefs of his people. He wrote on him a book in Gujarati named *Vir Sukrat*. Socrates is Gandhi's hero.

Gandhi read the New Testament. It appealed to him very much He says: 'The New testament produced a different impression, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which went straight to my heart. I compared it with the *Gita*. The verses, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosover shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" and "If any man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak too" delighted me beyond measure and put me in mind of Shamlal Bhatt's "For a bowl of water, give a goodly meal" etc. My young mind tried to unify the teaching of the *Gita*, the *Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount. That renunciation was the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly.'[88] Renunciation is the fire of religion that feeds the flames of truth and love. Gandhi wondered at the nonviolent character of Christ and to a great extent his faith in nonviolence was confirmed. He called Jesus the 'prince of satyagrahis' and said that he would not hesitate to call himself a Christian if (he) had to face only the 'Sermon on the Mount' and his own interpretation of it. Perhaps Christ—with his simple and straight but highly moral teaching, his purity of life and his Martyrdom—inspried Gandhi most of all the Western teachers of truth and nonviolence.

Acquaintance with the theosophists and their literature introduced Gandhi to the study of other religions. Theosophy believes that all religions are the branches of one Religion. Gandhi, in due course, came to the same conclusion: 'Religion is one tree with many branches. As branches, you may say religions are many, but as the tree, Religion is only one.'[89] With the help of his creed of truth and nonviolence, Gandhi also discovered that there was a fundamental unity among all religions. One touch of truth makes all religions kin; one knock of nonviolence renders all faiths one.

48. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 49.
89. *Hindu Religion*, p. 1. See also *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 2, edited by Homer A. Jack. Bombay, The Perennial Press (1961).

Among the Western sources of the modern period, Tolstoy has exerted the 'deepest spiritual influence'[90] on Gandhi's life. He admits: 'It was forty years back when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt that I came across his book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and was very deeply impressed by it. I was at that time a believer in violence. Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in ahimsa. What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy's life is that he practised what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth.'[91] Tolstoy was the greatest apostle of nonviolence that the present age has produced. No one in the West, before him or since, has written and spoken on nonviolence so fully or insistently and with such penetration and insight as he. Once Dr Hariprasad observed: 'Like Dattatreya, Gandhi had many gurus of whom Tolstoy was one.'[92] On hearing this remark, Gandhi said; 'I wish I could claim the honour.'[93] Everyone of us should have a guru, for 'true knowledge is impossible without a guru'.[94]

Next to Tolstoy, the other modern writer who influenced Gandhi most was Ruskin. His book *Unto This Last* brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in Gandhi's life. 'I believe I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life.'[95] Gandhi determined to change his life in accordance with the ideals of this book.[96] He says: ' I rose with the dawn, ready to reduce these

90. *My Religion*, p. 14.
91. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, pp. 302-03.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 116.
95. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 220.
96. The teachings of *Unto This Last*, as understood by Gandhi are as follows:
'1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and handicraftsman, is the life worth living.'

principles to practice.'[97] And Gandhi, who was as good as his word, did reduce these principles to practice. Thereby he lived up to his own teaching: 'Good books are the best company . . . It is good to read clean books. But it is better to weave into our lives that which we read in ennobling literature.'[98] We should reflect on what we read, practise what we preach, do what we determine.

Gandhi translated *Unto This Last* into Gujarati, entitling it *Sarvodaya* (the welfare of all). His own concept of sarvodaya, I think, has its roots in Ruskin's book, which 'gripped'[99] Gandhi.

Gandhi was also influenced, though indirectly through Tolstoy by the American Christians.[100] Tolstoy's book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* contained long letters and accounts of the practical application of the principle of non-resistance by Quakers and others in America, who strengthed Tolstoy's convictions; even as Tolstoy strengthened Gandhi's convictions about the practical application of his principle of nonviolence in life, which is satyagraha.

But Gandhi was more directly and deeply inflenced by the written words and revolutionary deeds of Henry David Thoreau the well-known American anarchist who refused to pay his taxes as a protest against slavery in America. He read with great interest his famous essay, 'On the Duty of Civil Disobedience.' In it Gandhi found a suitable English translation for his Sanskrit word, satyagraha. But later on, realizing its insufficiency to con-

97. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

98. Quoted from the fragments of a flap 'Gandhi Centenary 1969' printed by the Government of India.

99. Gandhi writes: 'Ruskin's *Unto This Last* was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. It gripped me.'—*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 220.

100. Gandhi was also grateful to the African Christians, who failed to convert him to Christianity but succeeded in rousing the religious search in him. He admits: 'Though I took a path my Christian friends had not intended for me, I have remained for ever indebted to them for the religious quest that they awakened in me. I shall always cherish the memory of their contact.'—*My Religion*, p. 14. There is always some hidden good even in the worst intention.

vey his meaning, he changed over to 'civil resistance' and finally to 'nonviolent resistance'. He also found confirmation of his faith in that weapon of 'Civil Disobedience' against the mighty power of the highly organised modern State. In fact, Thoreau's thoughts highly influenced Gandhi's nonviolent non-cooperation movement against the British Government in his country. He says: Thoreau invented and practised the idea of civil disobedience in Concord, Massachussetts by refusing to pay his poll tax as a protest against the United States Government. He went to jail too. There is no doubt that Thoreau's ideas greatly influenced my movement in India.'[101] What is possible for one is possible for all.

Thus we see that Gandhi drew inspiration for the technique of his satyagraha, which is the determination to reach truth through nonviolence, from the following sources:

1. The life of Socrates;
2. The teachings of Christ, especially his 'Sermon on the Mount';
3. Tolstoy's new interpretation of Christianity through his great book, *The Kingdom of God is within You*;
4. The American Christians and Quakers; and
5. Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience'.

After having dealt with the Western sources, I shall now take into consideration briefly the Perso-Semitic sources of Gandhi's teaching.

3. *Perso-Semitic Sources.* Besides the Christian sources of Gandhi's teaching, the Persian and Islamic influence should also be taken into consideration. They, too, have played an important role in his religious life. Passages from the *Zend Avesta* and the Holy *Koran* were also included in his mass evening prayers. Therefore, my account will not be considered complete without making a reference to the Perso-Semitic sources of Gandhi's teaching.

In South Africa, as I have already said, Gandhi came into

101. Quoted from *Gandhiji's Life, Thought and Philosophy*, pp. 47-48, by R.R. Diwakar. Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1963).

closer contact with many good Christians, Quakers and others, and read more of Christianity. He was influenced by some good Muslims here and studied Islam. One of them was Abdulla Seth. His acquaintance with the Holy *Koran* and Islamic literature in general was fairly good. Gandhi says: 'Contact with him gave me a fair amount of practical knowledge of Islam. When we came closer together, we had long discussions on religious topics.'[102] We receive a fourth of our religious education from our mother, another fourth by our own intellectual effort, a third fourth from our worthy friends and the rest in course of time through life and experience.

Acquaintance with the life of Christ stimulated Gandhi's spiritual hunger to study the lives of teachers of other religions as well. He says: 'This reading (of the New Testament) whetted my appetite for studying the lives of other religious teachers. A friend recommended Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. I read the chapter on the Hero as a prophet and learnt of the prophet's (Muhammad's) greatness and bravery and austere living.'[103] He also read Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet and His Successors*, and said: 'These books raised Muhammad in my estimation.'[104] Reading is a key to understanding, which is a prelude to appreciation and admiration.

Gandhi purchased Sale's translation of the *Koran* and began reading it.[105] He also obtained other books on Islam,[106] read them all and came to the conclusion: 'The very word Islam means peace which is nonviolence. The Sword is no emblem of Islam.'[107] Not war and violence, but peace and nonviolence is the teaching of every religion.

In addition to Islam, Gandhi also read Zoroastrianism. It is quite evident from what he himself has written: 'I also read a

102. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 77.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 134.

book called *The Sayings of Zarathustra*.'[108] As far as I know, Gandhi has not written anything else about this religion.

A. *Substance*. The sum and substance of our historical findings is that Gandhi's teaching has drawn its inspiration from the Indian sources in particular and the Western sources, including the Perso-Semitic sources, in general. Gandhi is an heir of both the mystic East and the materialistic West. In fact, he is indebted to the entire human race,[109] where there is neither East nor West, neither breed nor birth, but one family of man and one earth.

B. *Reasons*. As I have already explained, authority is the first source of Gandhi's teaching. 'I have always honoured and reposed faith in elders and wise men.'[110] The next source of his teaching is reason, which is a respecter of no authority, Eastern or Western. What really matters is whether Gandhi's religion is true or false when tested on the touchstone of reason. He says: 'My opinions should be considered as they are, irrespective of whether they are derived from the West or the East. Whether they are based on truth or untruth, himsa or ahimsa, is the only thing to be considered.'[111] Again: 'The source of my inspiration is of no consequence if what I stand for be unadulterated truth. I do not know what my philosophy is except that it is what I feel to be true. Let the philosophy I represent be tested on its own merits.'[112] Teaching and truth, religion and reason, philosophy and fact should go together.

Gandhi's teaching has its source in his independent reasoning as well. It owes its existence to different processes of logic, which is love come to an understanding of itself. Gandhi's religion is

108. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 115.
109. Gandhi: 'Mankind is one'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 149. Again, Gandhi: 'All Men are Brothers.' Cp. Radhakrishanan: 'All men are brothers and no human being should be a stranger to another.'—*All Men are Brothers*, p. vi., Cp. Thomas Paine: 'The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.'
110. *All Men are Brothers*, p. 217.
111. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 240.
112. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 256.

essentially ethical without ceasing to be rational. He believes in discarding that religion which is repugnant to reason. Gandhi says: 'The golden rule is to test everything in the light of reason and experience, no matter from whom it comes. I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality.'[113] 'Truth is superior to everything and I reject what conflicts with it. Similarly that which is in conflict with nonviolence should be rejected. And on matters which can be reasoned out, that which conflicts with reason must also be rejected.'[114] Truth is greater than its greatest teachers. Reason is superior to authority. It is the conviction of Gandhi that every formula of every religion has, in this age of reason, to submit to the test of reason and universal assent. [115] To rationalize religion is the task set to our generation.

C. *Experience*. After having discussed authority and reason as significant sources of his teaching, the most important and indispensable source that still remains to be reckoned with is Gandhi's own experience. He says: 'I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such powers as I possess for working in the political field.'[116] Gandhi's teaching has its real source in his experience, spiritual experience.

John Haynes Holmes rightly observes: 'His genius lies where he would have it—in the realm of spirit. It is his "soul-force" which has raised him to a position of unparalleled influence and leadership, and achievedt hings beyond the reach and range

113. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 189. Cp. Lord Buddha: 'Test my statements. Do not accept them on account of your regard for me. Put everything to the test of logic and life: and whatever is able to stand that test, demands acceptance. Whatever is not able to stand that test, deserves to be rejected.'—Quoted in the *Buddha Jayanti Souvenir*, p. 35. Delhi, Janty Printing Works (1956).
114. *Ibid.*, p. 190. Cp. Gregory: 'Faith has no merit where human reason supplies the proof.'
115. *Ibid.*
116. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. xiv.

of all but a few of the greatest characters of history.'[117] Gandhi is a spiritual genius,[118] His religion, which is the religion of truth and nonviolence, is rooted in Reality, in God, in Soul, in spiritual experience.[119] Gandhi says: 'Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal.'[120] A teaching which has no roots in experience, is based on sheer authority, and is a product of mere reason, is skin-deep and superficial, is only lecturing. And such a teacher is no more than a university lecturer. Authority should kindle reason, reason should expire in experience, tarka should end in anubhava.[121]

Gandhi is not opposed to reason, which he has gladly accepted as the second source of his teaching. But at the same time he is conscious, very deeply conscious, that reason is not everything, that God's ways are more than men's arithmetical calculations, that truth is no mere correspondence to fact, that love is more than logic, that religion cannot be reduced to the rubrics of reason, that experience is more than perception and introspection, expression and exhibition of intellect. Gandhi writes: 'I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason.'[122] We must recognize the

117. *Gandhi Memorial Peace Number*, p. 251, edited by Kshitis Roy, Santiniketan, Santiniketan Press (1949).
118. Cp. John Haynes Holmes: 'Gandhi was an intellectual as well as a spiritual genius.'—*Ibid.* Cp. Radhakrishnan: 'Gandni was a moral genius.'
119. Cp. Radhakrishnan. 'Satyagraha is rooted in the power of reality. in the inward strength of the soul.'—*Great Indians*, p. 41.
120. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 15.
121. Cf. Gandhi: '. . . though my views on ahimsa are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life.'—*Madern Review*, October 1916, quoted in *Conquest af Violence*, pp. 111-12. Again, Gandhi: 'I am not concerned what ideas of mine are the result of my foreign contacts. It is enough to know that my views on ahimsa have now become a part and parcel of my being.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 222.
122. *All Men are Brothers*, p. 222.

spirit in us which gives birth to reason and sanctifies it as well. Reason is only a secondary source, and not a primary source of Gandhi's teaching.

The primary source of Gandhi's teaching is experience, which does not contradict but complements reason, which does not trespass but transcends it. He writes: 'There are subjects where reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things on faith. Faith then does not contradict reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of reason.'[123] It is when the horizon is the darkest and human reason is beaten down to the ground that faith shines brigthest and comes to our rescue. In the spiritual dictionary of Gandhi, faith, experience, intuition, revelation, the voice of God, of conscience, of truth or the inner voice or 'the still small voice' mean one and the same thing.[124] Experience is one though its expressions are many.

Like a scientist, Gandhi made experiments about some 'of the eternal verities'[125] of life. They have been narrated in a dispassionate and humble spirit in his autobiography. Since his purpose was to give an account of various practical applications of moral and spiritual principles, Gandhi entitled his autobiography, 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'. His life consists of nothing but numerous experiments with truth.[126] These experiments include, among other principles, truth (satya), nonviolence (ahimsa), nonviolent resistance (satyagraha) and liberation (moksa). Making of experiments is necessary to put principles to proof, to verify the validity of spiritual experiences.

Gandhi's spiritual experience is not an 'unearthly ballet of

123. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 190. Kant, a great advocate of pure reason, also confesses the limitations of reason: 'There is a limit where the intellect fails and breaks down, and this limit is where the questions concerning God and free-will and immortality arise.' Cp. Napoleon: 'All the scholastic scaffolding falls, as a ruined edifice, before one single word—faith.'
124. *My Religion*, p. 45.
125. *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol. II, p. 241.
126. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. xiii.

bloodless categories', not an abstract vision of God but a concrete love of His entire creation, from the tiny insect crawling helplessly on earth to the daring man flying freely in the sky. He says: 'I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth, I am striving for the kingdom of heaven, which is spiritual deliverance. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the *Gita*, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul.'[127] Gandhi tried to combine salvation with service of man, spiritual experience with practical politics. Religion includes faith in human brotherhood and politics is the most effective means of rendering it into visible form. Politics is but applied religion. It is spirituality in practice. He writes: 'The most spiritual act is the most practical in the truest sense of the term.'[128] This is how Gandhi has interpreted 'spiritual experience' and thereby extended its meaning and scope. A worthy heir always adds to the legacy that he receives.

Gandhi has breathed life into the dry bones of spiritual experience, by injecting the blood of truth and adding the flesh of nonviolence to it. The results of experience, the conclusions of his life are not the outcome of an 'ideal experiment' as Bradley would call it, in which theory is compared to theory, and concept to concept, but the product of actual experiments on his own life. Gandhi says: 'Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and nonviolence.'[129] All experience is self-experience, which is spiritual experience.

127. Quoted in *Great Indians*, p. 20.
128. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 2.
129. *Truth is God*, p. 6. See also *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 13.

IV

QUESTION 3: WHY HAS GANDHI'S TEACHING SHOWN SIGNS OF DECLINE IN RECENT YEARS?

As far as I think, there are three main causes for the decline of Gandhi's teaching in recent years. They are: 1. Individualistic, 2. Governmental, and 3. Idealistic.

1. *Individualistic.* One of the greatest enemies of man is his greed. And where there is personal greed there is no individual morality. After my recent round-the-world lecture tour in 1964, I feel convinced that India is today one of the two or three countries where the people are comparatively more dishonest and selfish. This may be due to her backwardness in economy or education or both. But there is no denying the fact that it is there. The practice of Gandhi's teaching, which is truth and nonviolence, requires courage of conviction, change of heart, renunciation, will to serve and readiness to sacrifice one's all, including life itself. At present we lack these qualities which are a sine qua non for moral life and ethical living. That is why India, which was the major field of his activity, has failed to practise Gandhi's teaching of truth and nonviolence, tolerance and fearlessness, simplicity and nonpossession. She is copying Europe and America blindly.[130] Hence Gandhi's teaching has shown marked signs of decline in recent years. If a greedy nation is a catastrophe, a greedy individual is a nuisance. Avarice is the root cause of all evils.

2. *Governmental.* But I hold our present-day Government responsible to a greater extent for the non-practice, and therefore decline, of Ghandhi's teaching than the citizens of India themselves. As the king so the subjects, *yatha raja tatha praja.* Today the people of India are being governed by old men sitting at the Centre (New Delhi) most of whom are the so-called followers of Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. They swear in the name of Gandhi and Gandhism but daily deny him and his

130. Cf. *India of My Dreams*, by M.K. Gandhi, Chapter I, pp. 3-6 (1962).

teaching in their deeds indeed! Imitation alone is the touchstone of a sincere follower. Gandhism is nearest to their lips yet they are farthest from it. Nearer the church, farther from heaven. Gandhi once said: 'The highest honour that my friends can do me is to enforce in their own lives the programme that I stand for or to resist me to their utmost if they do not believe in it.'[131] At this critical juncture of history, our country is standing at the crossroads of Communism and Gandhism, of violence and nonviolence. Now the time has come when the Government of India must either implement on the national scale the programme that Gandhi stood for or resist him to its utmost if it does not believe in it, and embrace the contending and conflicting creed of Communism. There is no third alternative now left for India, the Government of India and the people of India, who are panting for political breath, and therefore pining for a purer air of administration. If the present Government is unable to do so, it must abdicate the throne of India voluntarily or be prepared to be overthrown by the forces which it had the power to create but not the wisdom to control.

Gandhi's conception of a nonviolent economy is the masterkey to economic equality. And working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and a levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other.'[132] It is his conviction that a nonviolent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and hungry millions persists.[133] It is no wonder that the Government of India is not nonviolent and is frequented by waves of periodical violence and bloodshed, which are shaking it to its foundations and waking it to the grim reality and necessity of economic equality without which the chances of

131. *All Men are Brothers*, p. 233. See also *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 107.
132. *My Socialism*. pp. 25-26, by M.K. Gandhi. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1969).
133. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

practising Gandhi's teaching of nonviolence on the governmental level are being reduced to zero.

During the days of his struggle for swaraj, Gandhi wrote with confidence: 'The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land.'[134] But to our deep disappointment, that crushing contrast has been steadily increasing since India became free twenty-two years ago in 1947. The present ruling party has to exert its every ounce of energy to put a dead stop to this fast growing dangerous tendency in order to fulfil the promise of Gandhi and avert the bloody revolution which is a foregone conclusion of this inhuman economic inequality. He himself had warned us all in these words: 'A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.'[135] Will not our Government heed his advice and be wise in time? Wisdom that drawns after the event is worse than folly. A violent economy—i.e. an unequal distribution of riches—is the root cause of violent revolution, and a nonviolent economy—i.e. an equitable distribution of wealth among all and sundry—is the sure cure for it.

Today there is gross economic inequality. But the basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no Rama-Raj[136] of Gandhi's dream, not even *Nehru Raj* (Socialistic Pattern of Society), 'in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat',[137] without the application of Gandhi's teaching by the Government of India in the economic sphere on a scale hitherto unforeseen in the history of our recent part.

134. *Ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*
136. Gandhi: 'The Rama Raj of my dream ensures the right alike of prince and pauper.'—*India of My Dreams*, p. 33. Again Gandhi: 'Swaraj is synonymous with *Rama Raj*—the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth.'—*Selections from Gandhi*, p. 255.
137. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

3. *Idealistic.* The last, though not the least, cause for our feeling that his teaching has shown signs of decline in recent years is given by Gandhi himself when he says: 'Between the ideal and practice there always must be an unbridgeable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it. The pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment. For in our progress towards the goal we even see more and more enchanting scenery.'[138] There is such a thing as divine discontent in human nature which makes man feel dissatisfied with his present achievement and compels him to go farther than the farthest limit. 'The virtue of an ideal consists in its boundlessness,'[139] What is limited is real; but that which is unlimited is ideal. One is achievement; the other is aspiration.

Not only today but for all time to come the 100 per cent operation of Gandhi's teaching, which consists in the application of the principles of truth and nonviolence to the current problems of society,[140] in our national life will remain a Utopian dream, and it will always be our part to try that it should become a reality. So that the perfect practice of truth and nonviolence will remain an ideal as long as we are alive, but towards which we must ceaselessly strive. Gandhi writes: 'The reality is always present before me, but my striving is always to reach the ideal. Euclid's straight line exists only in our conception, but we have always to strive to draw a true line corresponding to Euclid's imaginary line.'[141] The nature of the ideal is such that it will ever elude the real. 'The ideal is never fully realized in life:[142]—individual, national or international.[143]

138. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 123.
139. *Ibid.*
140. See *The Mahatma and the Ism.* p. 120. by E.M.S. Namboodiripad. New Delhi, People's Publishing House (1959).
141. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 123.
142. *My Religion*, p. 125.
143. Cf. Gandhi: 'I hold that nonviolence is not merely a personal virtue. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of nonviolence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.'—*My Nonviolence*, p. 85. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1960).

Even Gandhi sincerely felt that he was not fully following himself, that he was not a perfect Gandhite. He says: 'Let no one say that he is a follower of Gandhi. I know what an inadequate follower I am of myself, for I cannot live up to the convictions I stand for.'[144] In fact, no one can be a complete follower of himself, of his own ideals. 'It is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination. We cannot through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body, see face to face Truth which is eternal. That is why in the last resort one must depend on faith.'[145] Gandhi was not yet perfect. 'I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly nonviolent in thought, word and deed; but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. It is a painful climb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure to me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next.'[146] Gandhism is still in the making. And what is Gandhism? A puzzling question indeed! Even Gandhi could not define it. He writes: 'The intellectual conception does not satisfy me. I have not given you a perfect and full definition as you cannot describe your own thought [in his case Gandhism]. The very effort to describe is a limitation. Is defies analysis and you have nothing but scepticism as the residue.'[147] In spite of the limitation, we may say that Gandhism is a search after truth through nonviolent means.[148] But Gandhi would not be satisfied by

144. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 106.
145. *Selection from Gandhi*, p. 8.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
147. *All Religions are True*, p. 211.
148. See *Hindu Dharma*, p. 4. Cf. Gandhi: 'What is Gandhism but winning swaraj by means of truth and nonviolence?'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 106. See also *The Mahatma and the Ism*, p. 120. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya writes: 'Gandhism is not a set of doctrines or dogmas, rules or regulations, injunctions or inhibitions, but it is a way of life. It indicates a new attitude or restates an old one towards life's issues and offers "ancient solutions for modern problems".'—*Gandhi and Gandhism*, Vol. I, p. 35. Allahabad, Kitabistan (1943).

what we have described as his thought.[149] A dissatisfied Gandhi is better than a satisfied swine. A genuine dissatisfaction makes a great man still greater. Gandhi will always exceed Gandhism. 'I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds.'[150] Every man is greater than his 'ism'. The oughtness will ever excel the isness. The ideal will always exceed the real.

V

QUESTION 4: ABOVE ALL, OF ITS TWO KEY CONCEPTS OF 'TRUTH' AND 'NONVIOLENCE', WHICH MAY BE SAID TO BE THE CRUX?

I do not know how to answer this question, which in itself is a crux, a colossal crux, and therefore a crushing crux too.

It is not easy for me to give an exact answer to it, either by pointing to one (truth) or the other (nonviolence); for both may be proved to be cruxes, and none of the answers may be unanimously accepted. The clue to the answer lies in the standpoint adopted.

Almost all disputes, philosophical as well as factual, arise out of a confusion of standpoints. For example, there may be some to whom 'truth is the crux': there may be others to whom 'nonviolence is the crux'. Here the two answers are the judgements of two absolute standpoints in the form of *either or*. Absolute standpoints result in absolute judgements.

As regards myself, I believe in adopting a relative standpoint which steers clear of the two extreme answers mentioned above. A relative standpoint has both and more or less for its symbols. Hence my answer, which is the outcome of a relative judgement, is two-fold: A. Truth and nonviolence both are cruxes; and B. Nonviolence is a greater crux than truth, if and when weighed in the balance of the more or less criterion. But nobody knows

149. Cf. Gandhi: 'Well, all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is contained in what I have said. You will not call it "Gandhism"; there is no *ism* about it.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 4. See also p. 3.
150. *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 149.

the absolute crux. Therefore, 'the crux' should be replaced by 'a crux'.

Now it will be my earnest endeavour to substantiate the two answers by both facts and arguments.

A. *Truth and Nonviolence Both are Cruxes.* In support of this proposition, I shall quote Gandhi's comparative statements on truth and nonviolence in which he has tried to prove that both of them are cruxes. They are as follows:

1. 'The path of truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of ahimsa. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of a sword. By concentration an acrobat can walk on a rope. But the concentration required to tread the path of truth and ahimsa is far greater. The slightest inattention brings one tumbling to the ground. One can realize truth and ahimsa by ceaseless striving.'[151]

2. 'Life is a very complex thing, and truth and nonviolence present problems which often defy analysis and judgement. One discovers truth and the method of applying the only legitimate means of vindicating it, i.e. satyagraha or soul-force. by patient endeavour and silent prayer. I can only assure friends that I spare no pains to grope my way to the right, and that humble but constant endeavour and silent prayer are always two trusty companions along the weary but beautiful path that all seekers must tread.'[152]

B. *Truth is a Lesser Crux than Nonviolence.* I shall now quote those passages from Gandhi's writings which clearly show that truth is a lesser crux than nonviolence. They are as follows:

1. 'Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear.'[153]

2. 'I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim *Truth is God,* instead of the usual one *God is Truth.* That maxim enables me to see God face to face as

151. *Truth is God,* p. 32.
152. *Selections from Gandhi,* p. 7.
153. *Ibid.*

it were. I feel him pervade every fibre of my being.'[154]

C. *Nonviolence is a Greater Crux than Truth.* I shall now try to prove, in brief how nonviolence is a greater crux than truth by explaining Gandhi's concept of ahimsa myself.

1. *Nonviolence as a Crux.* But before proving his nonviolence as a crux, I would first of all like to explain what Gandhi himself is. For there is no difference between the person and his principle. If we know the former, we shall easily know the latter.

(i) *Gandhi himself a Quiz.* What is Gandhi? It is more difficult to know Gandhi than his deed or doctrine. Man is more than his thought, feeling or action. Gandhi means many things to many. He is an 'enigma'[155] to one, a riddle to the second and a puzzle to the third. Indeed, he is a very difficult person to understand.[156] There have been few men more universal and yet more controversial. So is his creed of ahimsa. It is as controversial as Gandhi himself.

Gandhi's concept of nonviolence is not a mere echo of his masters' voices, eastern and western, ancient and modern. His ahimsa is not a carbon copy of anybody else's. Like Gandhi himself, it is of its own type, unique. He says: 'My ahimsa is my own.'[157] As the man, so would be his doctrine. If he is a puzzle, it will be a riddle. Gandhi is a quiz, his nonviolence is a crux.

(ii) *Riddle of Killing and Non-killing.* Gandhi's creed of nonviolence is not a fixed formula but a flexible doctrine. In fact, it is a crux, a quiz, a riddle, a puzzle par excellence. Gandhi's ahimsa, which is his own,[158] is killng and non-killing both. In an article on 'The Fiery Ordeal', he speaks of 'When killing may be ahimsa, when killing is himsa'.[159] This intricate question of

154. *Truth is God,* p. 4.
155. *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi,* p. vii.
156. Cp. Nehru: 'As for Gandhiji himself, he was a very difficult person, sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern.'—Quoted in *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi,* p. 9.
157. *Hindu Dharma,* p. 242.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Ibid.*, pp. 215 and 219.

himsa, and ahimsa, which is the question of applied ethics (casuistry), places Gandhi's nonviolence on the horns of a moral dilemma. It, therefore, requires an exceptional common sense to solve the tangle of nonviolence. Philosophy is common sense in an uncommon degree. The riddle of killing and non-kllling is the riddle of ahimsa. How is killing nonviolence? is a question which even schoolboys ask, but Gandhi fails to give a cut and dried answer, a mathematical reply. All the same, I shall try to explain his view-point as clearly and briefly as I possibly can.

(a) *When Killing may be Ahimsa.* Gandhi was too practical a person to dismiss violence altogether from his concept of nonviolence. Since life itself involves some kind of violence, he advises us to choose the path of least violence.[160] We should commit the least possible himsa, only that much of violence which is inevitable for our life. And what is inevitable, Gandhi believes is not regarded as a sin: 'Violence will be violence for all time, and all violence is sinful. But what is inevitable is not regarded as a sin, so much so that the science of daily practice has not only declared the inevitable violence involved in killing for sacrifice as permissible but even regarded it as meritorious.'[161] Hence inevitable violence is no himsa. In fact, this apparent violence is real nonviolence. Gandhi himself says: 'It is no easy thing to walk on the sharps wordedge of ahimsa in this world which is full of himsa. Wealth does not help; anger is the enemy of ahimsa; and pride is a monster that swallows it up. In this strait and narrow observance of this religion of ahimsa one has to know so-called himsa as the truest form of ahimsa.'[162] Sureness of thought avoids hesitation in action.

What puzzles us most is that inevitable himsa cannot be exactly defined. Even Gandhi confesses his inability to do so when he says: 'But unavoidable violence cannot be defined.

160. Gandhi: 'Life itself involves some kind of violence, and we have to choose the path of least resistance.'—Quoted in *Religion and Society*, p. 236, by S. Radhakrishnan. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (1948).
161. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 155. See also *Hindu Dharma*, p. 194.
162. *Ibid.*

For what is excusable at one time may be inexcusable at another. The violence involved in burning fuel or coal in the depth of winter to keep the body warm may be unavoidable and therefore a duty, for a weak-bodied man, but fire unnecessarily lit in mid-summer is clearly violence. We recognize the duty of killing microbes by the use of disinfectants. It is violence and yet a duty. But why go even as far as that? The air in a dark closed room is full of little microbes, and the inrtroduction of light and air into it by opening it is destruction indeed. But it is ever a duty to use that finest of disinfectants—pure air.'[163] These instances can be multiplied. Gandhi gives us a few more concrete examples to prove that inevitable violence is not himsa.

The unavoidable destruction, according to Gandhi, caused for the purpose of protecting one's wards cannot be regarded as himsa.[164] 'My nonviolence does not admit of running away from danger, and leaving dear ones unprotected.'[165] Gandhi gives two examples one of a surgeon and the other when one kills a a person suffering from an incurable disease. Their acts of violence, in his opinion, should be considered to be perfect nonviolence. 'Just as a surgeon does not commit himsa but practises the purest ahimsa when he wields his knife on his patient's body for the latter's benefit, similarly one may find it necessary under certain imperative circumstances to go a step further and sever life from the body in the interest of the sufferer.'[166] In the opinion of Gandhi, the destruction of bodies of tortured creatures being for their own peace cannot be regarded as himsa'![167] This is why he himself got a calf of his

163. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 194.
164. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 155.
165. Quoted in *Religion and Society*, p. 236.
166. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 217. Cp. 'An actress shot and killed her lover at his own importunate request, as he was suffering excruciating pain from a disease from which there was no hope of recovery.' And Gandhi was requested to pass moral judgement upon this act of the actress. He declared it as an indubitable example of ahimsa. 'In my opinion, such killing, if it is done bonafide, will certainly not count as himsa as understood and defined by me.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 210.
167. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 155.

Ashram poisoned to death and declared it a pure and simple case of ahimsa.[168] Other circumstances can be imagined in which not to kill would spell himsa, while killing would be ahimsa.[169]

After examining a few concrete cases of himsa, we now come to the conclusion that a 'reference to both intent and deed is necessary finally to decide whether a particular act or abstention can be classed as ahimsa. The intent has to be inferred from a bunch of correlated acts.'[170] The true test of nonviolence does not depend upon the physical commission or omission of an act alone but also upon its motive and intention. 'Ahimsa does not simply mean non-killing. Himsa means causing pain to or killing any life out of anger, or from a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it. Refraining from so doing is ahimsa.'[171]

Ahimsa is a three-levelled concept—mental, verbal and physical (thought, speech and action). And we have to evolve three distinct, though not separate, criteria to judge it. Gandhi

168. Here is an actual example of violence committed by Gandhi himself, which he declared to be a case of cent per cent nonviolence though public opinion did not approve of his action and read nothing but himsa in it (*Hindu Dharma*, pp. 216 and 222-23). Once a calf having been maimed lay in agony in Gandhi's Ashram. Whatever treatment and nursing was possible was given to it. The surgeon whose advice was sought in the matter declared the case to be past help and past hope. The suffering of the animal was go great that it could not even turn on its side without excruciating pain. 'In these circumstances', writes Gandhi, 'I felt that humanity demanded that the agony should be ended by ending life itself. Finally in all humility but with the clearest of convictions I got in my presence a doctor kindly to administer the calf a quietus by means of a poison injection. The whole thing was over in less than two minutes.'—*Ibid.*

169. Gandhi himself gives his own imaginary example: 'Suppose, for instance, that I find my daughter—whose wish at the moment I have no means of ascertaining—is threatened with violation and there is no way by which I could save her, than it would be the purest form af ahimsa on my part to put an end to her life and surrender myself to the fury of the incensed ruffian.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 218.

170. *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 69, by Gopinath Dhawan. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1957). See also *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 257.

171. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 155.

himself lays down such a three-levelled final test: 'To say or to write a distasteful word is surely not violent especially when the speaker or writer believes it to be true. . . . False notions of propriety or fear or wounding susceptibilities often deter people from saying what they mean and ultimately land them on the shores of hypocrisy.'[172] 'But if nonviolence of thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be for the moment.'[173] We must speak daggers of truth, but use none. 'To conclude then, after a calm and clear judgement to kill or cause pain to a living being with a view to its spiritual or physical benefit from a pure, unselfish intent may be the purest form of ahimsa. Each such case must be judged individually and on its own merits. The final test as to its nonviolence is after all the intent underlaying the act.'[174] The essence of ahimsa is that there must be no violent intention behind a thought, word or act. i.e. an intention to do harm to the opponent so called.

Gandhi lays down *four* conditions, the fulfilment of all of which can warrant the taking of life of an ailing individual from the point of view of ahimsa. They are:

1. The disease should be incurable.
2. All concerned should have despaired of the life of the patient.
3. The case should be beyond all help or service.
4. It should be impossible for the patient in qustion to express his or its wish.

So long as one of these conditions remains unfulfilled the taking of life from the point of view of ahimsa cannot be jnstified.[175]

(b) *When Killing is Himsa.* Gandhi does not believe that all killing is himsa even as all non-killing is not ahimsa. There is no such thing as absolute ahimsa or perfect himsa. Causing pain or killing may be: 1. permissible himsa when it is resorted to

172. *Harijan*, 19-12-36. p. 362, See also *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 157.
173. *Ibid.*
174. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 219.
175. *Ibid*, p. 235.

for sustaining one's body or protecting one's words; and 2. (objectionable) himsa when life is taken out of anger, selfishness or ill-will.[176]

We shall first of all deal with concrete cases of killing as permissible himsa.

1. *Killing as Permissible Himsa.* All life in the flesh exists by some himsa.[177] None, while in the flesh, can thus be entirely free from himsa because one never completely renounces the will to live.[178] For example, those who eat fish and those who provide, both commit violence. So do those who eat vegetables.[179] This kind of violence is inherent in all embodied life, therefore, in man too.[180] It is in this condition and in spite of it, Gandhi believes, that we have to practise nonviolence as a duty.[181] 'Fishermen, fish-vendors and fish eaters are probably unaware of any violence in their action. Even if they were, they might look upon it as unavoidable.'[182] And in so far as violence is unavoidable, it is permissible violence, it is not violence, it is nonviolence. Gandhi says: 'I do not consider it violence to permit fish-eaters to eat fish. It is my duty to suffer it. Ahimsa is the highest duty. Even if we cannot practise it in full, we must try to understand its spirit and refrain as far as is humanly possible from violence.'[183]

A meat-eater, who has overcome his psychological foes, who has love and charity for all, whose every action is motivated by good intentions, is not guilty of violence, in the opinion of Gandhi. He goes so far as to say: 'Give me the man who has completely conquered self and is full of good-will and love towards all and is ruled by the law of love in all his action, and I for one will offer him my respectful homage even though he be

176. *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 68.
177. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 219.
178. *Ibid.*
179. *Ibid*, p.241.
180. *Ibid.*
181. *Ibid.*
182. *Ibid.*
183. *Ibid.*

a meat-eater.'[184] Sadan, a butcher and therefore a meat-eater, was such a one.

Gandhi's concept of nonviolence is quite revolutionary[185] in thought and action. Under certain circumstances he even allows the killing of ferocious and harmful animals, and does not consider it violence. 'My ahimsa is my own. I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the life of these animals who devour or cause hurt to man. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore, I will not feed ants, monkeys, or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs. Thinking along these lines I have come to the conclusion that to do away with monkeys where they have become a menace to the well-being of man is pardonable. Such killing becomes a duty.'[186] And a duty is an ahimsa,[187] at least a permissible himsa.[188]

2. *Killing as Himsa.* Now I shall deal with actual cases of hurting or killing as (objectionable) himsa. Gandhi has laid down the following conditions for judging objectionable himsa, which is real himsa.

(i) Those who quarrel among themselves.
(ii) Those who will stoop to anything in order to amass wealth.
(iii) Those who exploit or indulge in forced human labour.
(iv) Those who overload or goad or otherwise torture animals.

[All these four types of people mentioned above knowingly commit such violence as can easily be stopped.[189] Conscious committing of an avoidable violence is an objec-

184. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
185. Cp. Professor Radhakrishnan: 'Gandhi was a revolutionary thinker. He worked for a major change in human nature.'—*Mahatma Gandhi: 100 Years*, p. 1, edited by S. Radhakrishnan. New Delhi, Gandhi Peace Foundation (1968).
186. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 242.
187. Gandhi writes: 'Ahimsa is our supreme duty.'—*Hindu Dharma*, p. 251. Again: 'Ahimsa is the highest duty.'—*Ibid.*, p. 241.
188. See *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 155, and also *Hindu Dharma*, p. 220.
189. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 241.

tionable violence and therefore a real himsa.]

(v) The fifth criterion of judging an objectionable violence, in the view of Gandhi, is coercion, which is inhuman. He observes: 'The man who uses coercion is guilty of deliberate violence.'[190] For example, a man who coerces another not to eat fish commits more violence than he who eats it.[191] This instance has been given by Gandhi himself. That is why he never compelled anyone to give us fish-eating. Gandhi ever believed in persuasion and never in pressure. Persuasion is ahimsa, coercion is an objectionable himsa. Hence coercion is a genuine himsa, a real violence.

(vi) The sixth test of an objectionable himsa, according to Gandhi, is refusal of service on the theory of karma (law of moral causation). He gives an apt axample: 'If a man were to refuse to give medicine to a patient or to nurse him on the ground of karma, we would hold him to be guilty of inhumanity and himsa. Without therefore entering into a discussion about the eternal controversy regarding predestination and free-will, I will simply say here that I deem it to be the highest duty of man to render what little service he can.'[192] Service is man's highest duty, which is ahimsa,[193] and refusal thereof is himsa and a deliberate crime against humanity.

(vii) The seventh and the last condition of an objectionable himsa, in the opinion of Gandhi, is a violent intention behind a thought, speech or act. He says; 'To conclude then, to cause pain or wish ill to or to take the life of any living out of anger or a selfish intent is himsa.'[194] 'The essence of violence is that there must be a violent intention behind a thought, word, or act, i.e. an intention to do harm to the opponent so-called.'[195] The final test as to its violence is after all the intent underlying

190. *Ibid.*
191. *Ibid.*
192. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
193. Gandhi: 'Ahimsa is the highest duty.'—*Ibid*, p. 241.
194. *Ibid*, p. 219.
195. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 157.

the act.'[196] Since himsa, like ahimsa, is a tri-levelled concept—mental, verbal and physical—Gandhi has laid down a three-levelled test to judge it as well.

Objectionable killing is, indeed, himsa. But other and more insidious forms of himsa, Gandhi points out, are harsh words[197] and harsh judgements (*i.e.* those intended to hurt), ill-will, anger, spite, cruelty, the torture of men and animals, the exploitation,[198] starvation, wanton humiliation and oppression of the weak, the killing of their self-respect, etc.[196] The verbal and physical types of violence are far more crafty and corrupting in their effects than gross himsa, which is actual killing.

D. *Summary*. Causing pain or killing may be:

1. Ahimsa when it is the result of calm and clear judgement and the intention is to benefit the victim and relieve his agony, rather than to relieve the pain caused to the ahimsaist by this agony.

2. Permissible himsa when it is resorted to for sustaining one's body or protecting one's wards; and

3. Himsa (objectionable himsa) when life is taken out of anger, selfishness or ill-will.

196. *Hindu Dharma*, p. 219.

197. Commenting on the Sanskrit saying, 'Satyam bruyat priyam bruyat ma bruyat satyam apriyam" Gandhi writes: 'In my opinion the Sanskrit text means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it, if one cannot do so in a gentle way; meaning thereby that there is no truth in a man who cannot control his tongue.'—*Selections from Gandhi*, p. 157. Harsh words make verbal himsa.

198. Gandhi: 'Exploitation is the essence of violence.'—*Harijan*, p. 331. November 4, 1939.

199. *Young India*, III, p. 860. Cp. R.B. Gregg: 'Violence is any act, motive, thought, active, feeling, or outwardly directed attitude which is divisive in nature or result . . . that is to say, inconsistent with spiritual unity . . . It would include, for example, pride, scorn, contempt, anger, impatience, grumbling, spite, indignation, as well as killing, wounding, frightening, exploiting, deceiving, poisoning, tempting to evil, flattering, deliberate weakening of character and similar wrong,'—The *Power of Nonviolence*, p. 282. Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House (1960).

VI

CONCLUSION

In the end, I cannot help feeling that I have not been able to do full justice to the questions, which are unanswerable indeed. Mine has been a modest but an earnest attempt at their answers. That alone was my duty and therein lies my real satisfaction. I firmly believe in what Gandhi says: 'Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory.'[200]

If we are to follow in some small measure Gandhi's teaching,[201] we must live the truth,[202] love even our hater,[203] forgive our killer,[204] bless our ill-wisher, help the weak, nurse the sick, feed the hungry, emancipate the racially discriminated, free the politically subjected, uplift the socially down-troddden, save the economically afflicted, educate the ignorant, soothe the suffering, comfort the unhappy, condemn violence, praise and practise nonviolence in thought, word and deed.

200. *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 18.

201. Cf. Gandhi: 'Follow whatever commends itself to you in my life.'—*Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 143. Again Gandhi: 'My life is my message'.

202. Cf. Gandhi: 'Truth is not a matter of words. It is really a matter of living the truth.'—*A Day Book of Thoughts from Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 42.

203. Cf. Gandhi: 'If I hit my adversary, that is of course violence, but to be truly nonviolent, I must love him and pray for him even when he hits me.' Quoted in *Great Indians*, p. 41.

204. Radhakrishnan observes: 'Gandhi's death was a classical ending to his life. He died with the name of God on his lips and love in his heart. Even as he received the bullet wounds he greeted his murderer and wished him well.' *Ibid*, pp. 59-60.

Metaphysical Foundation of Gandhi's Thought

SURENDRA VERMA

The present essay has a two-fold objective: first, to bring out Gandhi's guiding ideas in a coherent form and thus to establish his metaphysical position; and secondly, to compare and evaluate his philosophy with the foundational thoughts on which it is based. It presupposes that Gandhi is not an academic philosopher and a metaphysician. He is mainly a socio-political reformer and thinker. Nevertheless as all social and political movements have underlying thoughts, one may try to piece together Gandhi's idea also and try to discover whether they are based on certain metaphysical grounds.

Gandhi is a monist and an idealist who believes in the unity of everything and every being and that they are governed by an unalterable law. The law is God himself, better known as truth to Gandhi. Truth is not a definition of the ultimate reality or God. It is itself the highest ontological reality, so that it can be said equally that truth is God and that God is truth. To think of the ultimate reality chiefly in terms of truth is indeed rare and Gandhi is one of those few thinkers who has oriented all his philosphical ideas, social as well as metaphysical, towards truth.

Gandhi however does not accept the dualistic theory of knowledge, according to which truth is regarded as conformity of knowledge to reality. For him it is not difficult to understand the identity of existence and truth, as is implied in the Sanskrit term for truth, 'satya', which is derived from 'sat' meaning 'existence'. Thus, truth in Gandhi's mind coincides with reality and refers to the first principle of being (sat) in all things.

Gandhi makes a clear-cut distinction between absolute truth and

relative truths. The absolute truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. It is the eternal principle which transcends time and history. It is beyond ordinary perception and thought and hence indescribable. It is presupposed by all the relative, temporal and perceptible truths. All relative truths, except the final absolute truth, shine as if by borrowed light. It is only in the light of the ultimate truth that lesser truths can be understood. Gandhi thus seems to side with the concrete monistic position, which by a process of abstraction does not isolate the phenomenal but includes it in the oneness of Reality.

Truth has infinite possibilities and openings. It is not feasible for any man to know the whole truth. But the way it reveals itself in the phenomenal world is through nonviolence, understood by Gandhi as the universal law of love. Not violence, not untruth but nonviolence, truth is the law of our being. It is the centripetal and cohesive force immanent in all of us and the world. It is one of the expressions of the ultimate truth and as such enjoys a metaphysical position identical with it. Nonviolence and truth are inseparable in Gandhi's mind and they presuppose one another. They are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle them. The equation of truth and nonviolence is the most original contribution of Gandhi to Indian metaphysical thought.

As far as Gandhi's epistemological position is concerned, he is neither an agnostic nor a sceptic; of course, the absolute truth, being the presupposition of all knowledge, is 'unknowable' by sense-perception or by reason. As a matter of fact, it does not need any medium to reveal itself. The distinction between the knower and the known disappears. It is by nature self-revealing and self-propagating. It is to be realized as 'the inner voice within'. Gandhi also calls this inner voice 'conscience'. The involuntary nature of the inner voice and the suddenness with which it reveals itself should not give an impression that it comes without effort. It needs rigorous spiritual discipline, which consists of several vows such as those of truthfulness, nonviolence and celibacy. Gandhi's ultimate metaphysical position thus

has an ethical basis. The 'conscience' that transcends the sense and reason is infallible only when it is an outcome of a pure and disciplined life. Metaphysical truth cannot be isolated from the moral truth. The two are organically related to each other.

Gandhi's conception of truth leads us directly to his idea of God. Gandhi says, 'To me God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience.' A superficial view of the above statement might reveal a gross non-academical understanding of God which ascribes anything and everything to the supreme reality. But if we try to understand Gandhi's idea of God in the light of his conception of truth, every part of the statement will become significant to us. God is truth means that God is not a personal being but a principle. Nevertheless the principle, though impersonal, includes ontological reality. This ontological reality works as a law of love in the phenomenal world and is the source of ethics and morality which are based on the universal principle of nonviolence. Nonviolence, however, is not a way of life for cowards but only for the brave. Fearleseness thus is included in nonviolence. And lest we think that the eternal law of nonviolence is confined to human beings only, Gandhi hastens to tell us that it is the source of light and life, that is, it is presupposed by everything, animate or inanimate, and every being, conscious or unconscious. And yet God as the law of love is not the whole of God. He does not exhaust His applicability to the phenomenal world only; He is also above and beyond it. He transcends the world and as such His understanding is beyond sense-perception and reason. He expresses His true character only as the 'conscience' of man, which also represents man's true self. The absolute reality of God thus has two modes of existence, as it were, one coinciding with the world of nature and man and the other transcending it.

God is the absolute reality, the phenomenal world of nature and man is the relative. The one is perfect, the other is imperfect. The former is infinite, the latter is finite; and yet the relative truth cannot be characterized as 'unreal'. God being immanent,

the phenomenal world partakes of His divinity. Man's ceaseless effort is to realise that divinity within. Human beings thus consciously or unconsciously are working towards self-realization.

When Gandhi speaks of self-realization, he is obviously speaking about the realization of the higher self, which in his mind coincides with the ultimate reality better known to him as Truth; and as nonviolence is the manifestation of truth in the phenomental world, self-realization, by implication, is the attainment of perfect nonviolence. Negatively speaking, it is freedom from the deadly coil of violence. Violence is brute-force belonging to the lower self, which according to Gandhi, in order to realize the higher self, should be reduced to zero.

Gandhi's ultimate aim thus is self-realization or salvation from violence. This is not an individualistic aim. The individual is bound up with the life of the community and therefore cannot expect his individual salvation except in relationship with every other individual. In order to realize himself he has also to spiritualize and moralize his surroundings through service of suffering humanity. Gandhi looks forward to the day when the principle of the identity of selves no more pertains only to the spiritual experiences of a few but finds its application in collective life as well. This is why he lays a great emphasis on disciplines like removal of untouchability, equal respect for all religions, bread-labour and swadeshi. Besides he also accepts the age-old disciplines of nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, continence, non-possession, control of the palate and fearlessness as preliminaries to self-realization.

Gandhi's metaphysical position as summarised above has nothing unique or original about it. This is a central position taken by Indian philosophy in general. It is therefore futile to search for the foundations of Gandhi's thought in any but the systems of Indian philosophy. The Upanishads, the *Yoga-sutras*, the *Bhagavadgita*, Jainism and Buddhism are the chief sources of Gandhi's basic philosophical ideas. Gandhi's philosophy thus is nothing but the continuation of Indian philosophical thought. Gandhi is merely a follower of a great tradition.

Gandhi accepts the monistic idealism of the Upanishads and

equates the essence of every being with the ultimate source of the world. Thus the Upanishadic identity of atman and brahman finds its echo in Gandhi's famous maxim, Truth is God. Gandhi's description of the ultimate reality is also strikingly similar to that of the Upanishads. In calling the Absolute one without a second, that which holds everything together and underlies all change, Gandhi follows the Upanishadic statements like ekam evadvitiyam, sarvasya vasi and nityo 'nityanam. Realizing that the ultimate reality is in the final analysis indefinable, Gandhi adopts again the Upanishadic technique of delineating it in paradoxes. As a matter of fact Gandhi's conception of the ultimate reality is almost identical with that of the Upanishads.

Gandhi has repeatedly emphasised that God is an idea, a principle: He is not a personal being. And yet one can never fail to notice Gandhi's partiality for the personal God, for he speaks primarily to the common man who is unable to understand God as an impersonal principle. In the *Gita* we find exactly the same attitude. The *Gita* speaks of the two aspects of the Supreme—the personal and the impersonal. But as it addresses itself mainly to the struggling soul which is represented by Arjuna, Krishna's partiality for the devotee of the personal God is obvious. And yet neither the *Gita* nor Gandhi has ever lost sight of the higher, impersonal aspect of the ultimate reality which transcends the lower, the personal aspect. On the other hand, Gandhi at least is very conscious of the dangers of worshipping God as a personal being. For he knows that in the name of God nameless atrocities are committed and people have indulged in lies and massacres of their fellow beings. Gandhi is not aware if anybody has done all these things in the name of truth. That is why he prefers to worship God as truth rather than as a personal being.

Gandhi's emphasis on the impersonal aspect of God sometimes is so great that he speaks of the ultimate reality as 'an unalterable law'; and here Gandhi's position comes very near to that of Buddhism. The Buddha rejects the existence of God because he finds that in his age people have tried to justify every

immoral act in the name of God. He therefore emphasises and redeclares the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of the universe and calls it dhamma. 'The unalterable law' of which Gandhi speaks is nothing but the Buddhist dhamma, which is the very nature of things as they are and which holds all. But while Gandhi accepts the unalterable law without rejecting God, the Buddha rejects God in order to accept the dhamma.

As far as the conception of self is concerned, Gandhi again joins hands with the Buddha in rejecting the psychological self. In order to reach the truth one must reduce the self to zero, and be free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. The Buddha also finds the psychosomatic complex of personality 'empty of self' and realizes that the main cause of our suffering is that we strive to make permanent selves each with its own wants and desires. He calls on us therefore to develop a selfless attitude. But while the Buddha never speaks of a higher self than the one he denies, Gandhi following the idealistic tradition of Hindu philosophy, believes in the universal self which transcends the individual ego and coincides with the ultimate reality. It should, however, be conceded that Gandhi's philosophy, by and large, is truth-and God-oriented and not self-centred.

What is true of Gandhi's basic metaphysical ideas is also true of his practical philosophy. The latter is also in line with Indian thought and is not implanted from outside. The chief foundations of his practical philosophy are the teachings of the *Ishopanishad*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Yoga-sutras*. Gandhi never preaches renunciation of the world and the life of an ascetic for the salvation of the soul. His is a phenomenal activism with a spiritual bias and consists in active participation in worldly duties for the achievement of final values. This is possible because Gandhi, in accordance with the Upanishadic metaphysical stand, gives a respectable place to the phenomenal world of relative truths. There is a continuum from the relative to the absolute and the only way to reach the absolute truth is to follow sincerely and faithfully the relative truth as one sees it from time to time. There is no need, therefore, to denounce the phe-

nomenal world and renounce activity. Only our activity must be selfless, without any desire for its fruit. And this is the important lesson that Gandhi learns from the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Ishopanishad*.

To reach the universal truth through one's own truth as one sees it from time to time one has to discipline oneself lest one arrives at the wrong truth. Gandhi is not so naive as to suppose that conscience is infallible, that one sees invariably the correct truth. To arrive at the correct truth one has to crucify his body and his lower psychological self and follow a strict spiritual discipline, which consists of the five cardinal restraints of nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. These restraints are prescribed by the Yoga philosophy as preliminaries to spiritual life and Gandhi accepts them without reservation.

Gandhi is a great absorber. Both the orthodox as well as the heterodox systems of Indian philosophy have perceptibly coloured his thoughts and shaped his works, This however does not mean that Gandhi's philosophy is to be disparaged as borrowed philosophy.

Gandhi has never followed the shastras without using his own discrimination. If a scripture blinds a person's reason, it is of no use. 'Man is not to drown himself', says Gandhi, 'in the well of the shastras, but he is to dive in their broad ocean and bring out pearls. At every step he has to use his discrimination.' Thus Gandhi's belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require him to accept every word and every verse in them as divinely inspired. He declines to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to his reason or moral sense. Nay, he will not accept anything if it is also not 'capable of being spiritually experienced'. Gandhi thus does not accept any idea simply because it is given by some scripture. He puts it to the test of reason, of moral sense and of spiritual experience. The last is probably the most important test to which he puts ideas in order to accept or reject them. Gandhi is not an armchair philosopher confined in an ivory-tower of contemplation. He is an experimentalist who tests ideas in the laboratory of his

own life and thus earns knowledge by living it. He does not borrow it second-hand. Gandhi has very rightly called his autobiography, '*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*'. This reveals his scientific spirit and practical attitude towards philosophy. Philosophy for him, in accordance with Indian tradition, is not mere information, it is transformation. If it is not lived and does not change life accordingly it is worthless.

Gandhi does not offer a highbrow ideology. He is not a 'heavy philosopher' like Sankara or Hegel. Nevertheless he gives fresh meanings and new lives to stale and dead idioms of philosophy. He does not give up Hinduism but at the same time he does not fail to perceive also that words have lost their meanings and convictions have become infirm. Gandhi's attempt is to re-establish old ideas with new vigour and to apply them in every walk of life.

Gandhi's philosophy can be termed a revolt against the willless thought of the philosopher and the thoughtless will of the man of affairs. It is an attempt to reach a compromise, whereby a philosopher, far from retreating into an ivory tower, may come down from his spineless contemplation to participate actively in the affairs of men; and whereby the man of affairs may give up his thoughtless and selfish activity and orient his work according to the age-old principles of truth and nonviolence. Politics and philosophy are thus brought together. They can no more be kept separate. Gandhi does it by introducing religion into both. Secular philosophy in order to be more effective must turn into religious philosophy. And this is why, in spite of his firm conviction that the ultimate reality is essentially an idea, a principle, an unalterable law, Gandhi never gives up his belief in a personal God for the sake of getting His living response to difficulties and troubles. Similarly, the thoughtless, selfish politics must be transformed into well thought out, selfless activity for the welfare of all; and this, again, can be done only by introducing religion into it. Devoid of religion there is in fact no politics for Gandhi. Politics subserves religion. Politics bereft of religion is a deep trap because it kills the soul.

Gandhi not only seeks a balance between thought and will,

between a philosopher and a politician, he also attempts to combine the individual and social points of view. Like a Vedantin, his sole aim is the individual's salvation or what can be termed 'self-realization', but unlike a Vedantin he always thinks in terms of the millions. He wants to make truth and nonviolence matters not merely for individual practice but for practice by groups, communities and nations. This at any rate is his dream. The truth about the identity of selves should not remain the monopoly of a few but should be experienced in the collective life as well. Sankara following traditional Vedanta emphasises merely the salvation of the individual. Aurobindo tells us that the salvation of the individual is needed for a matamorphosis in his immediate environment which is brought out by the very illuminating personality of the realized soul itself. Gandhi, however, goes a step farther by contending that salvation is impossible without effecting a change in the social environment, for an unfavourable social environment will drag the individual down. This however does not mean that an aspirant should live in a fictitious non-social environment. It would be madness to sever one's connection with the society to which one belongs. The only way out is to attain spiritual values by selfless service to the community to which one belongs. Gandhi's conception of salvation is neither one of salvation of the individual for his own sake nor one of the individual for the sake of society. It means reformation and reorientation of society for the sake of the individual's self-realization.

We thus find that Gandhi has given new life to old ideas by throwing them open for application to the life of the community and worldly affairs; and in this process he has also given fresh meanings to state idioms. Thus, the concept of nonviolence has achieved a completely new connotation. In the hands of Gandhi it is freed from the principle of non-activity in which it originated and has become a commandment to exercise full compassion. He raises ahimsa to a metaphysical status and makes it the 'law of our being'. No thinker before him has ever given such a positive connotation to ahimsa and, likewise, it was never prior to him thought to be a metaphysical principle. Ahimsa presup-

poses sacredness of life, but it also implies dignity of the human being. The ahimsa that goes against the dignity of the human being and has no positive reference to love and compassion is no true ahimsa for Gandhi. We thus find that Gandhi has given a completely new orientation to the principle of ahimsa which itself is as old as the Himalayas.

Besides *earning* his philosophy by living it and giving novel meanings to stale ideas, Gandhi has also sometimes coined completely new terms and concepts in order to express some of his original ideas. Words like satyagraha and anasaktiyoga are illustrations in point. While the term satyagraha summarises at once his social philosophy and his metaphysical stand, anasaktiyoga embraces Gandhi's complete ethics.

One may allege that Gandhi's phrases might be new but what they convey is not novel, that Gandhi provides the same old wine in new bottles. Here we have to note that Gandhi himself never claims any originality. He is a follower of the great Indian tradition and he has absorbed all that he found good and acceptable into his own Weltanschauung. This however does not minimize his greatness as a philosopher. As a matter of fact, in India at least a philosopher who is a follower of a great tradition earns greater respect than the one who claims originality. The latter is looked upon with suspicion. Gandhi is beyond suspicion. Gandhi is great not because he has coined new words and thrown out new phrases but because he has given life to dead ideas and has lived his philosophy.

The True Significance of Gandhi

ESME WYNNE-TYSON

There is always a risk when assessing the value of a man of such exalted stature as Gandhi to concentrate on this or that feature of his life-work until the sight of the whole is lost through placing too much emphasis on the parts. This has happened in the case of many great men, and there is a danger of it happening to Bapu.

The divided garment of Jesus Christ spoken of in the New Testament symbolised this fragmentation of character always liable to occur in the case of men too great for lesser men wholly to behold, or comprehend. As plotinus tells us: 'To any vision must be brought an eye fitted to what is to be seen and having some likeness to it. . . . Never can a soul see beauty unless it itself is beautiful.'

For the people of India Gandhi is primarily, and naturally, the Father of the Nation, the man who did more than any other one person to gain India's freedom from foreign rule; the great nationalist, the beloved Bapu. For the materialist he was yet another social worker. For the pacifist and, lately, also for the more progressive non-pacifist thinkers of the West, his great importance lies in having provided an alternative means of defence to that of physical warfare which, owing to the terrible potentialities of nuclear armaments, could today exterminate most of the human race. For the vegetarian, Gandhi is the humanitarian par excellence, at once justifying and encouraging by his integrated advocacy of ahimsa, the vegetarian way of life.

But although Bapu was all these things he was something infinitely more, and it is that something more which should always be recognised and remembered if we are to know the true Gandhi, since it explains and integrates all the other aspects of his life,

being the centre from which his activities flowed—and that was his character of the mahatma.

How rarely in the West this particular aspect of Gandhi appears to be commented upon and analysed, even by his admirers! There seems to be a diffidence, or reluctance, to inquire too closely into the philosophy of the Father of the Indian Nation. Perhaps in the majority of cases it is a question of incapacity, a lack of understanding of what the title of Mahatma really involves, but there is also, I believe, an instinctive fear of probing too deeply into what may prove to be an embarrassing subject —the beliefs of a man whose opinions men are bound to respect, but might find it very uncomfortable to share.

In the *Idealist View of Life* Dr. S. Radhakrishnan wrote: 'No one can know the Truth without being the Truth.' And it may in a sense be said of one whose God was Truth: 'No one can know Gandhi without being Gandhi.' For to be Gandhi in any degree must involve the acceptance of his three disciplines, brahmacarya, ahimsa and satyagraha.

There is a tendency in the West to imagine that one can practise nonviolent resistance merely as a technique, an alternative policy to armed resistance by following the actions of Gandhi without becoming what Gandhi inwardly was. I believe this to be a mistaken assumption. It may succeed superficially in local disputes and with certain foes, as it has succeeded recently in Africa and America, but it will work no radical and lasting changes in the condition of mankind unless it is accompanied by the spiritual dynamic of Gandhi. Yet so few people seem willing to inquire into, or learn, of what that dynamic consisted. It is enough for them to acknowledge that he was a mahatma, a great soul, a good man who triumphantly practised nonviolent resistance—and on this last point they are eager to emulate him—but they show a curious disinclination to examine too closely the all-important disciplines that alone made this triumph possible.

In November 1954, his son Manilal Gandhi observed in a letter to me: 'It is true that talk of brahmacarya does not appeal to the Western mind. The mysterious power they attribut-

ed to my father was nothing but his strict adherence to *brahmacarya* and truth, and *ahimsa* came in their wake.'

When I regard the well-known public men of Britain who are even now considering the 'adoption' of Gandhi's methods of nonviolent resistance, it is difficult to believe that they really understand what these methods involve, and even more difficult to imagine their adoption of them. As Manilal Gandhi complained in another part of the letter previously quoted, those about him who spoke of spiritually opposing the forces of materialism were themselves slaves of such 'trifling things as cigarettes', and when one considers the sensual dependencies of the Western man and, in many cases, woman, it is almost impossible to imagine them practising what is implied by the term brahmacarya, the complete purification of the personal life, that results in non-attachment. Yet without it, and the inseparable disciplines of ahimsa and satyagraha it is impossible really to adopt Gandhi's methods and therefore to achieve their liberating results.

The situation is precisely the same as in the case of Jesus Christ and Christianity. Enthusiasm was aroused by the pure and perfect life of healing and compassion exemplified by the Mystic of Galilee. People were eager to follow him and be like him; but they did not inquire too deeply into what that 'being like' involved. They were content to accept the vague description, 'He went about doing good', ignoring Paul's far more difficult instruction: 'Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus'.[1]

Yet, as Dr. Radhakrishnan also tells us, 'To understand Christ we must have the Mind of Christ' (which was so obviously, to a great degree, the mind of Gandhi). Instead of which his so-called followers have throughout the countries done 'what they could', what they felt could reasonably be expected of them, without that radical change of thought which was the true meaning of the re-birth referred to at the interview with Nicodemous, when the Master said: 'Except a man be born of water

1. Phil., 2 : 5

and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'.

This water of the Johanine baptism which took place at the beginning of Jesus's ministry symbolised total purification, or brahmacarya; the Spirit being the spirit of truth of which the Master spoke when he declared: 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'.[2] It was this truth, this satyagraha, which enabled Gandhi to liberate both himself and his country.

But the followers of Jesus have been content with something much less than becoming so imbued with the mind of Christ that they could heal the suffering, sinning and sick by spiritual means. Human philanthropy has been considered sufficient; working and sometimes suffering for good causes; doing social work, nursing the sick and doctoring them by methods based on the cruelty of animal experimentation, nearly three million animals having been used in the research laboratories of Britain alone during 1956—and India knows the fate of her exported monkeys!

Yet despite all these worthy efforts, the violence and immorality of the Western world today are greater than they have been in living memory. Despite the 'good works' of Christians, some of which have resulted in temporary relief for sections of mankind, there has been no radical cure for its ills, and certainly no general attainment to the mind of Christ which was meant to be, and could still be, the saviour of the world.

In a letter to some friends, written in 1924, and quoted by C.F. Andrews in *Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story*, Gandhi says: 'I am far from being perfect. I am simply a humble aspirant for perfection. . . . I do not consider myself worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the race of prophets. . . .

Whether this appraisal of himself, with its characteristic humility, was as true in 1947 as he thought it was in 1924, must be a matter of doubt to those who followed his spiritual evolution and remarkable life during the intervening years. At most it was true only if it referred to degree and not to kind. For there is no doubt whatever that Gandhi was of the same evolv-

2. John, 8 : 32.

ed species as the greatest teachers or *risis* of the human race—a man who, having shed much of his animalism, evidenced a character of harmlessness (ahimsa), purity and compassionate love. This was also the nature of both Gotama Buddha and Jesus Christ.

In his enlightening book entitled *Lenin and Gandhi*, Rene Fulop-Miller gives a picture of the two archetype men: Lenin, the man, and revolutionary hero, of this world, the man of conspiracy, hatred and violence; Gandhi, the man of peace, harmlessness and compassionate love. Here we have the two distinct types of men who have always existed as patterns for others. They represent the choice of two ways of life, the ways of Barabbas, the man of violence, and Jesus Christ, the man of peace. We have only to look at the world about us to learn what has been mankind's choice so far. And yet, once again in our own century, we have been given yet another opportunity of making the momentous choice between becoming a Lenin by putting on the mind of total materialism, or a Gandhi by putting on, as far as we could conceive it, the mind of Christ.

This is the true significance of Gandhi—the exemplar of this age. And those who see him as anything less, as a mere patriot, pacifist or humanitarian, have not begun to understand the real greatness of the man.

If men of the East or the west are to follow him, if his methods are to be adopted as an alternative to the violence from which humanity needs so urgently to be saved, they must be prepared to accept those disciplines of *brahmacarya* and *satyagraha* from which alone can emerge an effectual demonstration of *ahimsa*.

The *brahmacarya* vow taken by Gandhi at Phoenix in 1906 was his equivalent to the purification symbolized by baptism which took place at the begining of Jesus's ministry. Gandhi writes of this in his autobiography, that at a certain period of his life he 'had not realized . . . how indispensable continence was for self-realization' but that he 'clearly saw that one aspiring to serve humanity with his whole soul could not do without it'.

In that one sentence lies the answer to India's acute problem of over-population, if those who say they love him are really

willing to follow him. And that such a condition has its personal satisfactions is evident from his further statement: 'Life without *brahmacarya* appears to me to be insipid and animal-like. The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of self-restraint. What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of brahmacarya in our religious books, seemed now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded in experience.'

There must also be that integrated love of and trust in Truth that made Gandhi what must surely have been one of the most truthful men in history, even in the most intimate matters of his personal life. There must be, too, that complete reliance on God's guidance evidenced in his statement that: 'Five or six times in my life I have experienced that one whom God wishes to save cannot fall even if he will'.

Even as Jesus relied on the truth—the truth that the will of God was wholly good; that he manifested that will, and could only do what the Father willed and did—for healing the sick, suffering and sinning, so Gandhi relied upon the same truth for purifying his inner life and for establishing justice and friendly relations between men and nations. Truth was in his opinion the great and, finally, the only power.

In *Truth is God* he reminds us that in the Hindu scriptures it is said that 'God alone is and nothing else exists', and that the Sanskrit word for truth is one which literally means 'that which exists'. He goes on to say: 'And when you want to find truth as God the only inevitable means is love, i.e. nonviolence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and the ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is love'. No student of the New Testament could fail to recognize in this argument the presence of the mind of Christ.

To the question in this same book: 'What then is truth?' there follows an answer that should be deeply pondered by any would-be follower of Gandhi's way of life. He replies at first that the question is a difficult one. For him, truth is 'what the voice within tells you'; but people have different concepts of truth since 'the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all' and

what is true to one may be an untruth to another. It is, he says, obvious that men must be trained by self-discipline up to the level where they can hear the true voice within: 'Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way such preliminary discipline is necessary, to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm'.

Before he can rely on the voice within such a man must take five vows: 'The vow of truth, the vow of brahmacarya (purity)—for you cannot possibly divide your love for truth and God with anything else—the vow of nonviolence, of poverty and non-possession. Unless you impose on yourselves these five vows you may not embark on the experiment at all.'[3]

Those who speak casually of 'adopting Gandhi's methods' would do well to study these exacting conditions, for they alone make the policy of ahimsa—universal compassionate love, mercy and harmlessness—possible and effective. For until self has been conquered, the interests of this self will still delude us into imagining truth to be what it is not. As an instance of this, Gandhi gave the case, in the article just quoted, of how 'in the name of truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection'. (Both Gandhi and Tolstoy advocated spiritual healing which they believed to be the only ethical kind.)

Therefore in a world dedicated to science worship it is not going to be an easy matter to adopt the methods of Gandhi, for these put the curb of ahimsa on scientific experimentation as on all other forms of violence and cruelty, even as the Golden Rule from the Sermon on the Mount was originally intended to do.

No useful purpose can be served by hiding from ourselves the fact that really to adopt the methods of Gandhi is to accept a completely different way of life from that led by humanity today and that nothing less radical will solve the problems of the present age. We cannot pick and choose, taking what we wish from

3. *Young India*, 31 December 1931.

Gandhi's instructions and ignoring the rest; this is merely to play at the regeneration that alone can save mankind, for it is the same remedy that was offered nearly two thousand years ago by the Gallilean Prophet. Our rejection of it at that time and our indifference and wilfulness since, have landed us in the present situation where we are faced with the possible extinction of the human species unless we are willing, at last, to obey.

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