

MAHATMA GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

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## P R E F A C E

The world is curious to find out a solution to the many baffling problems of humanity especially at a time when the weapons of destruction have been perfected. Various suggestions have been given for this. Mahatma Gandhi gave the answer to this in his concept of Non-violence. He suggests it as a weapon for political and economic emancipation of the down-trodden and as a device to establish amity in the comity of nations. An objective exposition, analysis and evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence directed towards the realization of this aim is, therefore, very relevant. The present work is an attempt in this direction. It is a study of the use and possibility of non-violence in political life.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter contains a brief review of the early life of Mahatma Gandhi and the time when he flourished. A brief mention of the political climate of India and South Africa has been made there. The second chapter deals with the sources of Mahatma Gandhi's Non-violence. Here the influence, exercised upon him by the Gita, the Bible, Ruskin, Thoreau Tolstoy and others has been discussed. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis and exposition of Mahatma Gandhi's concept and technique of non-violence. Here the various techniques of Satyagraha suggested by Mahatma Gandhi have been dealt with. The fourth chapter analyses the role of non-violence in an individual's life. The experiments with truth made by Mahatma Gandhi in his personal life have also been discussed. The fifth chapter is a discussion of the role of non-violence in the life of a nation. Here various Satyagraha

movements in South Africa and India have been critically analysed. The sixth chapter deals with the role of non-violence in international affairs. Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion about solving the problems between nations non-violently and the possibility of its use have been assessed. In the seventh chapter a critical appraisal of Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence has been made. It deals also with the influence exercised by Gandhi's non-violence on various persons and organizations.

In the writing of this thesis original literature, photostat copies of Mahatma Gandhi's letters, backfiles of Harijan and Young India, pamphlets, reference books and standard works written by distinguished persons have been consulted. In the collection of material for this work, I am indebted to a large number of people and institutions. I acknowledge, in particular, my gratitude to the authorities of the Gandhi - Smarak Sangrahalaya, Rajghat, New Delhi for giving me all the facilities to consult rare documents and other literature available there. I am also indebted to the staff of the Central Library, B.I.T.S., Pilani. I am especially grateful to Mrs. D. Upadhyaya, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, B.I.T.S., Pilani for her great help and inspiration.

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## CHAPTER I

### MAHATMA GANDHI AND HIS TIMES

Gandhi was a leader of stature in the history of the Indian Nationalist Movement for, "...all one can say is that whatever he was he was like no other man of his age. 'Perhaps he will not succeed,' wrote Tagore ten years before Gandhi's death. 'Perhaps he will fail as the Buddha failed, as the Christ failed, to wean men from their iniquities, but he will always be remembered as one who made his life a lesson for all ages to come'."<sup>1</sup> He was spiritually advanced with a developed intuition. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in his 'History of the Indian National Congress' writes, "He saw things as if by a flash and framed his conduct by impulse. To the righteous men these two are the supreme guides of life, not reason nor intellect."<sup>2</sup> Again, "...He alone of front rank political figures of our times, claimed...to be acting at the prompting of the inner voice."<sup>3</sup>

Mohandas Karmachand Gandhi, born on the 2nd October, 1869 at Porbandar flourished as a political leader and to some extent a political philosopher. It was a chance coincidence that the future prophet of peace and non-violence should have seen the first ray of the sun at a time when the industrial revolution was advancing further in the European countries. At that time there was a race for armaments and the clouds of the first World War had begun to hover in

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1. Krishna Kripalani, Gandhi A Life, p.XV.  
(Orient Longmans, New Delhi, October, 1963)
  2. R.C. Majumdar, Three Phases Of India's Struggle For Freedom, p.52.  
(Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1961)
  3. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.1.  
(The English Universities Press Ltd., London, 1968)

the skies of the world. There was mutual hatred and competition among different nations. At such a time Gandhi began to spiritualize politics because he said, "Most religious men I have met are politicians in disguise. I, however, who, wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man." <sup>4</sup> He believed in ethical religion which, divorced from morality, is devoid of all solidarity. Gandhi joined politics due to his being a religious man as he wrote, "...my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics, ... that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means." <sup>5</sup> He believed in inner strength for "the higher life for the unfoldment of which Gandhi would use the life of the world and its manifold activities as a lever is essentially a life which is strength incarnate." <sup>6</sup>

Again coming to India proper we find that the tense atmosphere of 1857 was not there. In 1858 the crown had taken over the affairs of India from the East India Company. The Britishers believed in the theory of the 'White man's burden' of civilizing the backward peoples. At this time there was dissatisfaction with the British regime among peasants also. The cause of this discontent was the great famine in 1877 but as proper political consciousness was lacking in them, they could not start a major political agitation. The urban elite was dissatisfied too due to the restrictions on the freedom of the press.

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4. G. N. Dhawan, Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p.33. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951)

5. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, pp.370-371. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1958)

6. Kshitij Roy, ed., Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, p.74. (The Visva Bharati Quarterly, Santiniketan, 2nd October, 1949)

A new class of intelligent persons, educated in the liberal and democratic ideas of the west and conversant with the works of authors like Mill and Rousseau was rising. This class began to feel the suffocating atmosphere during the British regime as at every step their liberty was being curbed. In the 19th Century bureaucracy behaved in a really strange manner. "The bureaucrat was trained how he should handle the people upon whom he was going to be placed, rather than how he should work for their welfare and progress." 7

In the Indian struggle for freedom, Gandhi occupies an important place side by side with many others like Gokhale, Tilak and Jawaharlal Nehru. He was responsible to a great extent for steering the ship of the Indian nation clear through the troubled waters of British politics. Writing about the place of Gandhi in human civilization, J.L. Nehru writes, "In that story Gandhi occupies and will occupy a prominent place." 8 Nehru further adds, "...I have no doubt that in the distant as in the near future this towering personality will stand out and compel homage." 9 There is a reference to Gandhi's greatness in 'Letters from Gandhi, Nehru and Vinoba' by Shriman Narayan. When Narayan was invited by Jaganlal Bajaj to meet Gandhi, Narayan wrote, "I was quite hesitant to do so because the Mahatma was too great a man for me and I did not like to waste his

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7. Ram Gopal, British Rule In India, p.244.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962)

8. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.1, p.XI.

9. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.1, p.XII.

precious time." <sup>10</sup> Again Doke says, "He is one of those outstanding characters with whom to talk is a liberal education, whom to know is to love." <sup>11</sup> Rajendra Prasad wrote about Gandhi's divine nature, "I have some times felt that Mahatma Gandhi is a modern replica in human form of the sacred Ganga." <sup>12</sup> Again Rajendra Prasad felt about him, "Great men simplify great principles and make them easily intelligible to ordinary men. Gandhiji, by insistence on this one simple thing, wanted to change the current of our whole life." <sup>13</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan wrote about Gandhi that he, "...belongs to the race of the prophets who have the courage of the heart, the courtesy of the spirit and the laughter of the unafraid." <sup>14</sup> Again Radhakrishnan wrote, "This puny figure of seven stones was a giant among men...By his side, other men, very important and famous men, big in their own way, big in their space and time, look small and insignificant." <sup>15</sup> Pearl S. Buck remarked about his greatness, "To me Gandhi has been, through his own personality, an expression of what India is." <sup>16</sup>

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10. Shriman Narayan, Letters From Gandhi, Nehru, Vinoba, p.1.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968)
11. Joseph J. Doke, M.K. Gandhi-An Indian Patriot In South Africa, p.13.  
(Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1967)
12. Rajendra Prasad, At The Feet Of Gandhi, p.VI.  
(Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay, 1955)
13. Rajendra Prasad, At The Feet Of Gandhi, p.327.
14. R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao, The Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi,  
Foreword by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.  
(Navajivan Ahmedabad, 1967)
15. Kshitis Roy, ed., Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, p.257.
16. D.G. Tendulkar And Others, ed., Gandhiji His Life And Work, p.XII.  
(Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, October 2, 1944)



Writing about the position and prestige of Gandhi, Humayun Kabir wrote, "Never before has an inhabitant of a dependent country achieved such a position and prestige in contemporary world history as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi." 17 G. Ramchandran comments, "Gandhi's life was one long and ceaseless saga of endeavour in which he added, bit by bit and piece by piece, to his stature culminating in the advancing fullness of his personality." 18 Gandhi wrote about himself, "...I am no master, I am but a struggling, erring, humble, servant of India and there through, of humanity." 19 Gandhi's role in the Indian national movement becomes important and dynamic due to the fact that he roused the Indian masses from the slumber of self negation and taught them fearlessness and Truth due to which the British policies could be opposed. As a man Gandhi was deeply devout and religious and to him Truth was God and God Truth. Like Plato the search for Truth was important to him. As a matter of fact to him the progress of life itself was a search after Truth.

Like a true leader he did not merely believe in Truth but showed its path to the people. He realised the Truth but he also took the vast multitude of men along with him on the path to its realisation for, "A passionate lover of humanity, he was that not in theory only. He painted his life's experience, not just in the large stroke, which merely gives an outline, but filled the sketch with a plethora of minutely worked out detail for practice." 20 Still further like a

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17. D.G. Tendulkar and others, ed., Gandhiji His Life And Work, p.123. (Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, October 2, 1944)

18. G. Ramchandran and T. Mahadevan, Gandhi His Relevance For Our Times, p.376. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1964)

19. Young India, September 11, 1924, p.298.

20. Kanwar Lal, Good Bye Mr. Gandhi, p.38. (Arts And Letters, Darya Ganj, Delhi, 1969)

leader Gandhi left the stamp of his personality over a particular period of history and also moulded the circumstances. Gandhi did it well. In the Gandhian era, Gandhi tried to implement non-violence at all the stages. To uphold it, he moulded the circumstances accordingly. He bravely faced the opposition. "He was a natural fighter and peace maker."<sup>21</sup> He stuck to the course of non-violence steadfastly. As a person he was flexible but he never knew any flexibility as regards his ideas of non-violence or concept of Ahimsa. He was always very clear about the means to be employed and the objectives to be achieved.

People in India had developed a slave mentality due to centuries' of foreign rule. This condition was aggravated by the pitiable sub-human economic standards of living of the people. Gandhi tried to do away with the slave mentality of the people and solve the unemployment problem to some extent by launching the khadi programme. Gandhi was born in an ordinary family, though both his father Karamchand and grand father Uttamchand had served as chief ministers in the princely state of Kathiawar. He was born in much less glamorous circumstances than Jawaharlal Nehru. He was born of the fourth wife of his father, Putlibai. This religious lady influenced him much. Among many factors which moulded Gandhi's character, Putlibai's role was very significant. As a boy Gandhi was not sharp and intelligent. Like many leaders, he mostly kept quiet in his childhood when he would like to be left alone. He felt shy in the company of others. "This surrender of the privileges of child-

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21. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.185.  
(Harper Bros., New York, 1950)

-hood may have contributed to an excessive passivity, passing into a morbid diffidence and preventing him from playing with, and even speaking to other children."<sup>22</sup>

At the age of 12 he was married to Kasturbai. When he was sixteen years of age, his father died and then he was left to the care of his mother and brothers. In 1887 he passed the matriculation examination from the Ahmedabad Centre after which he went to London for further studies. At this time Indians generally did not favour anybody's going abroad, but Gandhi was determined to go despite opposition from the members of his caste, modh banias, a class well-versed in trade and commerce. He was admitted to the Inner Temple, London, on November 6, 1888 to study law. While in London Gandhi was in search of a vegetarian restaurant. He found one where vegetarianism was propagated. There he purchased 'Plea For Vegetarianism' by Salt and this created in him love for dietetics and he came into contact with other vegetarians. "To be a vegetarian was to align oneself with the vegetarians of England. To eat at their restaurants was to come into contact with them."<sup>23</sup> He stopped the consumption of sweets, tea, coffee etc. In the residential locality of Bayswater, he started a vegetarian society. While in London, he for the first time read the Gita in the company of a few theosophists and further became more interested in religious literature. Religion gave him new thoughts and fresh inspiration. He read also the Sermon On The Mount.

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22. B.N. Manda, Mahatma Gandhi, p.20.  
(George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1958)

23. Geoffrey Ashe, Gandhi-A Study In Revolution, p.33.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968)

He passed the Bar Examination on June 10, 1891 and was enrolled in the High Court on June 11. In 1891 he came back to India. This period was of great ferment. Most people in England had become interested in the affairs of India which they began to consider their own. Different political philosophies were coming to the fore. The working classes were clinging to Das Capital of Karl Marx like the Bible. Gandhi returned to India from such an atmosphere and received the shocking news of the death of his mother. He remained in Rajkot for sometime and then went to the Bombay High Court to gain experience there. After this, a Mohammedan Company of Porbunder settled in South Africa, called him there in connection with a case. "He could hardly have imagined the new vistas of maturity and public service which the South African adventure was to open to him."<sup>24</sup> A couple of incidents during which he was beaten and insulted took place there and these strengthened his ideas against the behaviour of the Englishmen towards Indians in South Africa. Due to these incidents Gandhi was in doubt whether he should remain in South Africa at all. At first he feared the Englishmen but gradually he overcame this fear and decided to stay there.

In 1894 the Natal Indian Congress was founded by him and a bit later he organised an ambulance corps during the period of the South African war and the Zulu rebellion. It was done by him with a view to help the British Empire. Here lies the sincerity of Gandhi. He did not hate the Englishmen but their deeds of subjecting the Indian population to a state of misery. In June, 1896 he sailed for

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24. B.R. Manda, Mahatma Gandhi, p.36.

India in order to take his wife and children along with him to South Africa. When he was in India he came into contact with G.K. Gokhale, and also published a pamphlet depicting the deplorable condition of Indians in South Africa. Due to this the British population in South Africa got angry with Gandhi. He sailed back to South Africa again on November 28, 1896 but there were very stringent laws at that time against the landing of Asians in South Africa. The atmosphere was very tense. When Gandhi landed in South Africa a crowd collected round him and the people began to beat him mercilessly. "He fainted ...But they came upon him boxing and battering."<sup>25</sup> He continued there for sometime but left Natal in November 1901 for India with the members of his family. He thought of starting his legal practice in Bombay in June, 1902 and settled down there. But in December of the same year there was again a call for him from the Indian Community of Natal after which he went to South Africa, of course, to start a bigger campaign. He was a well wisher of all, as Tagore writes, "An ascetic himself he does not frown on the joys of others, but works for the enlivening of their existence day and night."<sup>26</sup>

In 1904, April, he took the responsibility of editing 'The Indian Opinion' which continuously ventilated the grievances of the Indian Community in South Africa. In 1906 was started his Passive Resistance Movement which he called a bit later 'Satyagraha Movement'. It was begun in connection with a notification by the Transvaal Government in the Gazette requiring every Indian in South Africa to

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25. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.I., p.60.

26. Kshitij Roy, ed., Gandhi Memorial Peace Number, p.11.  
(The Visva Bharati Quarterly, Santiniketan, 2nd October, 1949)

get his finger prints registered with the Government. There was much opposition to this ordinance and a movement was started in which thousands of men and women participated and some even courted arrest. Finally, the Indians were victorious. Gokhale wrote about Gandhi, "It is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately, and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth."<sup>27</sup> In 1910 the Tolstoy Farm was established by him in South Africa and prior to this in 1904 he had established the Phoenix Farm. "On Tolstoy Farm we made it a rule that the youngsters should not be asked to do what the teachers did not do...."<sup>28</sup> He was inspired by many factors in this direction. On the two farms Gandhi did different jobs himself eg. of a printer, scavenger etc.

In 1909, while returning from London to South Africa Gandhi had worked on the manuscript of 'Hind Swaraj' or 'The Indian Home Rule'. It is a satire on the present day Indian Civilization and aims at a society where there is no exploitation. In the meantime he had established contacts with Count Leo Tolstoy who was appreciative of this book. When Gandhi had written to Tolstoy, he replied, "... God help our dear brothers and co-workers in the Transvaal. The same struggle of the soft against the harsh, of meekness and love against pride and violence, is making itself felt every year more and more

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27. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Speeches And Writings, Vol.II, p.420. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966)

28. M.K. Gandhi, All Men Are Brothers, Life And Thoughts Of Mahatma Gandhi As Told In His Own Words, p.31. (A Unesco Publication, 1959)

among us here...." 29 He also commented that Satyagraha was an important idea for the whole world. Tolstoy died on November 20, 1910 and Gandhi felt very sorry at that. Gokhale also visited South Africa in connection with the Satyagraha struggle. On November 17, 1912 he left South Africa. Satyagraha continued there over Indian Immigration and Indian marriages Act. Gandhi along with many others was arrested. Finally, the Indian Relief Bill was published under which £ 3, a tax levied on immigrants, was abolished; all marriages which were deemed to be legal in India were legalized and domicile certificate with the thumb impression of the holder was considered to be a good proof for the purpose of rightful entry into South Africa.

When Gandhi returned to India in 1915, he was given the title of the Mahatma by Rabindra Nath Tagore. At this time he was merely a spectator of the fleeting events for sometime. The Congress organization in the beginning looked at him with respect and hatred-respect for his activities and achievements in South Africa and hatred for his non-conformist approach to political and social problems. At that time the Congress was dominated mostly by the people from the cities. Hence Gandhi turned his attention to the villages where farmers suffered and lacked enlightenment. When in February, 1916 Gandhi spoke at the Banaras Hindu University, the people were amazed for, "as he mounted the platform, the audience craned forward to gaze at the individual of whom they had heard so much. Was this the Mahatma? Before them stood a wisp of a man in cotton clothes, a man with thinning hair and ears like little wings flying out from his head.

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29. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.97.

But his very first words froze the listeners to startled attention."<sup>30</sup> It was the signal for the arrival of a new force in Indian politics. Even then the old guards of the Congress looked at him with a feeling of distrust at that time. Even Nehru was not impressed in his first meeting with Gandhi in 1916. It was really an accident of circumstances that brought Gandhi and Nehru together. In 1917 he campaigned in support of the indigo plantation workers successfully at Champaran. After this he brought about awakening among the farmers in Gujarat. He was a dedicated man with the experience of a Satyagrahi, determined to use the non-violent way in the Indian struggle also. He was a great man for "Bapu's marvellous personality is best seen in his heterogenous surroundings...Many people say that even great men are surrounded by deceptive people and it is in their midst that their greatness is put to test."<sup>31</sup>

After the first World War was over there was a feeling of curious anticipation mixed with a sense of dissatisfaction in 1919 among the Indian masses. The British Government was pledged to self-Government for the Indians under the Montagu declaration of 1917. After the first World War again, political consciousness among Indians grew. In India the atmosphere of subjugation and slavery was no more tolerable. In the Punjab there was much tension and now the peasants too were sharing in this rising wave of political consciousness. The congress was still under the constitutionalists who wanted to cooperate with the British authority. A special session

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30. Jeanette Eaton, Gandhi Fighter Without A Sword, p.149.  
(William Morrow and Co., New York, 1950)

31. Mambehn Gandhi, Last Glimpses Of Gandhi, p.255.  
(Shiva Lal Agarwal and Co., Delhi, 1962)



of the Congress was called to consider the Montague Chelmsford proposals. The British Government had recommended Dyarchy at the Provincial level but the Congress wanted 'self Government within the empire'. Even then the Congress was loyal to the British Government.

After the passage of the Rowlatt Bills and the enactment of the tragedy at Amritsar the mood of the Indians was against the Britishers. About, "Twenty thousand people-men, women and children gathered at the Bagh." <sup>32</sup> General Dyer entered the Bagh with about 150 soldiers and "without a word of warning, he opened fire at about hundred yards' range upon a dense crowd...." <sup>33</sup> The Rowlatt Bills were nothing but the renewal of the British policy of suppression because under these the political agitators could be detained. "After a hundred, two hundred years of British rule...officers declared it impossible to maintain internal order, unless they were given the power to lock up, without trial, anybody they liked, for as long as they liked!" <sup>34</sup> Under preventive detention measures one could be asked also to reside at a particular place compulsorily. Gandhi felt much about it and he requested the Viceroy not to give his assent to these bills but his appeal failed. After it a Satyagraha society was formed by him. Every member of this society was a passive resister and as such they disobeyed this law.

After the Jallianwala Bagh incident the Government began to rule

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32. Pattabhai Sitaramayya, History Of The Indian National Congress, Vol.I, p.164.  
(Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946)

33. Valentine Chirol, India Old And New, p.178.  
(Macmillan, London, 1921)

34. H.C.B. Zacharias, Reascent India, p.189.  
(George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1933)

over Amritsar, following the policy of suppression. Public floggings became a normal routine and crawling orders were also given. After this tragedy a former I.C.S. officer wrote about the Government's attitude towards the people in respect of consulting them on important issues, "That consent was now changed to active mistrust."<sup>35</sup> This tragedy gave rise to the indignation of the people against the British because there was "the assumption implied in the behaviour of responsible Englishmen and in their evidence before the Hunter Commission, that Indians could and should be treated as an inferior race."<sup>36</sup> Persons like Nehru felt much about it and began to like the idea of Satyagraha under the influence of Gandhi. At the Amritsar session of the Indian National Congress where Pandit Motilal Nehru was the President, Gandhi, the hero of the masses by now, counselled the old guard of the Congress to accept his advice about welcoming the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms inspite of their inadequacy. As regards the tragedy and hardships of the people, he told his colleagues, "the Government went mad at the time. I say, do not return madness with madness, but return madness with sanity and the whole situation will be yours."<sup>37</sup>

In 1920 a new turn came in Indian politics due to the Khilafat issue which became a live issue. Turkey had been defeated in the first

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35. Philip Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, Vol.II, (The Guardians), p.243.  
(Jonathan Cape, London, 1954)
36. Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt, Rise And Fulfilment Of British Rule In India, p.610.  
(Macmillan, London, 1934)
37. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, History Of The Indian National Congress, Vol.I, p.181.  
(Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946)

World War and the Allied Powers decided to dismember it and abolish the office of the Caliph. It aroused hatred in the minds of the muslim community towards the British Government. Gandhi was keen to utilize the discontent in the two different spheres to start his Non-Cooperation Movement. It was, of course, a strange unity of two divergent purposes - Gandhi's non-violent movement with religious tolerance and the religious and fanatic movement of Islam. Gandhi not only won over the sympathies of the Muslim community but also made the Congress movement a mass struggle. August 1, 1920 was to be the date for the inauguration of the non-cooperation movement and unfortunately it was on this date that Bal Gangadhar Tilak died in Bombay. The Congress met in September 1920 in Calcutta to discuss and draft its policy on non-cooperation. For the first time it appeared that the Congress was determined to shake off the shackles of cowardice. The lower middle class was represented by its leaders and prominence was given to Khadi and Hindustani.

There was opposition to this programme from persons like C.R. Dass, Lajpat Rai, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Mrs. Annie Besant and others but despite it, it was given the sanction of an official policy by the Congress. Its programme was simple, though negative in character. It meant to boycott the coming elections under the Act of 1919, Government schools, colleges and law courts. Towards the end of 1920 the Nagpur session of the Congress put the seal of affirmation on the leadership of Gandhi. Now the Congress changed its goal from 'self Government within the Empire' to that of Swaraj by non-violent means. Instead of self-Government and non-cooperation were used the words Swaraj and Satyagraha. After Gandhi's call for Satyagraha and Swaraj, M.A. Jinnah resigned from the Congress and later on he was devoted

merely to the Muslim cause. For the first time, the Congress organisation took the mass colour. Gandhi remained in complete control of the Congress till 1947 and it was due to his efforts that it became a mass organisation. His method was novel because Gandhi connected politics and religion. He said, "I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the kingdom of Heaven, which is spiritual deliverance...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."<sup>38</sup>

For quite some time there was nation-wide inertia. People did not come forward to join the struggle for freedom perhaps due to the fear of the British rule. The All brothers of the Khilafat Movement were arrested in 1921 and Gandhi utilized this opportunity in favour of his non-cooperation movement. He wrote, "...it is sinful for any Mussalman or Hindu to serve the existing Government whether as soldier or in any other capacity whatsoever."<sup>39</sup> After the death of Tilak there were only two ways before an average man - terrorism and constitutionalism. The Mahatma invented a new way and that was Satyagraha. Mahatma Gandhi renounced material comforts and appealed both to the masses and the intellectuals. He was continuing his non-violent struggle — but after the violent incidents at Chauri Chaura in February, 1922, he abruptly gave a call to terminate the Non-Cooperation Movement, primarily because he thought that the

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38. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi, Essays And Reflections On His Life And Work, p.14.  
(Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1957)

39. Young India, September 29, 1921, p.311.

nation was not ready for a non-violent movement. Mahatma Gandhi was essentially a man of peace for he said, "I am a man of peace, I believe in peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that you find in stone; I do not want the peace that you find in the grave; but I do want the peace embedded in the human breast which is exposed to the arrows of a whole world but which is protected from all harm by the Power of the Almighty God."<sup>40</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru was not happy with the suspension of this movement but Gandhi wrote to him, "...that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle...."<sup>41</sup> Though the non-cooperation movement was suspended yet the Congress made progress under Gandhi. Even then, "No one could understand why Mahatma should have used the isolated incident at Chauri Chaura for strangling the movement all over the country."<sup>42</sup>

People in India had begun to doubt the leadership of Gandhi. Despite this it began to appear that Hindu - Muslim unity was near at hand. There was mutual cooperation among different communities. But Gandhi insisted upon pure non-violence for which the people were not yet ready due to which the great Non-Cooperation movement had failed. With the advance of Kamal Ataturk in Turkey and the flight of Sultan, Caliph from there, the Khilafat agitation in India died down. Hindu - Muslim riots again began in 1923. Gandhi had

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40. Young India, January 19, 1922, p.43.

41. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.II, p.118.  
(Viththalbhai K. Jhaveri, Bombay, December 1951)

42. S.C. Bose, The Indian Struggle, p.73.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964)

already been imprisoned in March, 1922 after which internal conflicts began in the Congress. Now there were two groups in the Congress of pro-changers like C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru who wanted the Congress to participate in the general elections and no-changers like C. Rajagopalachari who were not in favour of the Congress participating in general elections. The latter wished to concentrate on the issues of communal harmony, spinning, abolition of untouchability etc. They liked to abstain from politics until the conditions were ripe for a fresh Civil Disobedience movement. Gradually the rift widened especially at the Gaya session of the Congress where C.R. Das presided but the no-changers were victorious as the policy of non-cooperation of Gandhi had been reaffirmed by the Congress. C.R. Das resigned from the Presidency and announced his intention to form a new party known as the Swaraj Party for which he got the support of Pandit Motilal Nehru. The no-changers were advised to support Gandhi's constructive programme.

In 1923 a compromise was arrived at between the Congress and the swarajists - the former concentrating upon the constructive programme alone and the latter on political matters. Gandhi at this time was expressing his ideas against British imperialism also. He wrote, "The greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That imperialism is a negation of God." 43

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43. Young India, August 21, 1924, p.276.

Before the close of the year Gandhi agreed with Motilal Nehru about recognizing the Swaraj Party as the constitutional wing of the Congress party which would support it. Gandhi was the President of the Congress at the Belgaum session in December, 1924 and there this compromise was approved of. For the next four years the Mahatma was away from politics and inspite of his efforts in the direction of communal harmony there were Hindu - Muslim riots in Delhi, Nagpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Shahjehanpur, Jullunder and many other towns on petty matters. Even then one of the achievements of the non-cooperation movement was that it created unity between the Hindus and the Muslims at least for some time.

In November 1927 the Simon Commission was boycotted and when the British Government did not assure the Indians of Dominion Status, the Congress was left without a choice and hence in its session at Lahore in 1929, under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it passed the resolution that complete independence was its goal. The Congress also gave a call to the people to be ready for the coming struggle in this direction. Gandhi started yet another movement of Civil Disobedience on March 12, 1930. This time it was done in connection with the boycott of the tax on salt which is a commodity of necessity. Gandhi went on foot from Ahmedabad to Dandi to break this law. In connection with this Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru writes about Gandhi, "Many pictures rise in my mind of this man...But the picture that is dominant and most significant is as I saw him, marching staff in hand, to Dandi on the salt March in 1930. Here, was the pilgrim on his quest of Truth...." 44

The Government came forward with a policy of suppression under which thousands of non-violent satyagrahis, including Gandhi, were arrested. Gandhi was imprisoned on May 4, 1930 but was released on January 26, 1931. Nehru wrote about Gandhi, "Nineteen thirty had indeed been a wonder year for us, and Gandhiji seemed to have changed the face of our country with his magic touch...It was a spiritual gain at any time and to any people, but doubly so to us, a subject and down-trodden people." <sup>45</sup> On March 5, 1931 was signed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact under which the Civil Disobedience movement was called off. Thousands of non-violent workers were released and the Government now declared that making salt for personal use was no more an offence. Gandhi agreed to participate in the second Round Table Conference at London. No Congress representative had been sent to the first Round Table Conference. The results of the first Round Table Conference were disappointing also. In the second Round Table Conference Gandhi made the case of India clear. He found here that the real issue of India's independence was relegated to the background and the issue of minorities was coming to the fore.

Gandhi realized that the future of India in British hands was bleak. He tried to settle issues with the Muslims but to no avail. He tried to tell them that the Congress organisation in India represented 85% of the population and in view of this the issue of minorities was trivial and should not bother them much. Gandhi was dissatisfied with the trends in the Round Table Conference. When Gandhi returned to India at the end of 1931, he found to his utter

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45. J.L. Nehru, An Autobiography, p.255.  
(The Bodley Head, London, 1949)



surprise that hundreds of men who mattered, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan etc. had been imprisoned. He announced his plan of starting Civil Disobedience again. Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel were arrested on Jan. 4, 1932 and kept in Yerwada Jail. The Communal Award was very much in the air but Gandhi never wanted that the British policy of 'Divide And Rule', should be successful even in the case of the Depressed Classes. He announced in August 1932 that if the Communal Award were given by the Government, he would go on a fast unto death from September 20. There was a hectic activity to bring about a compromise. B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables was requested to attend a representative conference. As a result many temples were thrown open to untouchables, after which Gandhi broke his fast.

Gandhi retired from the Congress Organization in 1934, and thus from its leadership also. He began to consider that Congress men were adopting non-violence only as a political expediency. Many people could not follow the mind of the Mahatma at this time. Nehru wrote, "In spite of the closest association with him for many years, I am not clear in my mind about his objective."<sup>46</sup> After this Gandhi began to reside at Sevagram, a village near Wardha. At this time he concentrated upon the Khadi programme and began to fling tirades at the industrialized machine age. He was in favour of breaking the monopoly of machines by manufacturing khadi with the help of the spinning wheel (charkha). After some time the Government came forward with the Government of India Act of 1935 under which the Congress went to the polls and achieved success in the general

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46. J.L. Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, p.119.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966)

elections of July, 1937. It got majority in six out of eleven British provinces. Its success was possible due to the constructive programme, drafted by Gandhi. In this programme Gandhi had underlined prohibition, relief for the farmer in debt and basic education. It was the desire of Gandhi that the villages should be given the basic priority in any future Congress programme but it remained a dream only.

When the second World War began in 1939, Gandhi was for giving help to the British Government without any condition. Nobody supported him in this move. It was hoped by the Indian nation that in return for some help to the British in their hour of crisis, at least the demand of the Indians for self-government would be respected. The British Government in a state of nervousness announced that the Indians were with them in their war effort. As the popular ministries were not consulted on this, the Congress ministries resigned en bloc in November 1939. In January 1940 there was an exchange of letters between Jinnah and Gandhi. Jinnah was emphatic about his two-nation theory and said that there was nothing like an Indian nation. He considered Muslims of India to be a separate nation and he made an announcement at the Lahore session of the Muslim League in March, 1940 to this effect. Gandhi was much surprised.

Gandhi was trying to implement his policy of non-violence. The Allied Powers had a tough time in the early phase of the war. Japan was just preparing to strike at the Allied bases in the Pacific. In July, 1940 the Congress Working Committee came forward in a cooperative spirit but as the Viceroy did not give an assurance of independence immediately, it began to look forward to the lead of Gandhi. Gandhi wanted freedom of speech against war and thus in

October 1940 he started the individual Civil Disobedience movement. Many satyagrahis courted imprisonment at this time. Due to the advance of Japan in the Far East, the British Government wanted the support of India to meet this challenge. So in December 1941 all the satyagrahis were released. The Cripps Mission failed to satisfy Indian opinion in March, 1942. The All India Congress Committee, presided over by Maulana Azad, pressed for the Quit India Resolution on August 7, 1942. "The Cripps Mission failed. The answer which Mr. Gandhi gave to the British Government at that time was 'Quit India'." 47 On August 9, 1942 Gandhi along with many other Congress leaders was arrested. There was quite a big uprising in the country in this connection. Gandhi was detained in Poona. During this detention Mahadev Desai, his private secretary and Kasturbai died in the prison itself. The Government was following the policy of suppression under which thousands of satyagrahis were killed.

In January 1943, Gandhi criticized the Viceroy, Linlithgow for Government's act of violence. Then he went on a fast for 21 days, beginning on February 10. On May 6, 1944, on grounds of health, Gandhi was released. Wavell succeeded Linlithgow as the Viceroy of India and in the search for a solution to the Indian problem, he held a conference in June 1945 but it failed because he insisted on Hindu Muslim parity in any future Governmental set up. In March, 1946, Jinnah again began to give vent to his communal feelings, justifying the creation of Pakistan but Gandhi was against such a theory. It was the responsibility of the Cabinet Mission to give its decision about Pakistan. On May 16, 1946 the Mission announced that the

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47. A.C. Banerjee and D.R. Bose (compiled), The Cabinet Mission In India, p.109.  
(A. Mukerjee & Co., Calcutta, 1946)

British authority would be withdrawing from India completely. They also recommended a unified India with a single federal Government to deal with affairs like Defence, Communication and Foreign Affairs.

The Muslim league did not accept the Mission's Plan and began to plan for Direct Action. Jinnah did not agree to Wavell's plan for Interim Government. On September 2, 1946 Jawaharlal Nehru became the Vice President of the Interim Government, the Viceroy being the President. Gandhi cautioned Nehru about a few points and insisted that he should make efforts to abolish the Salt Tax, try to establish Hindu Muslim unity, abolish untouchability and further the use of Khadi. The Muslim league fixed August 16, 1946 as the Direct Action Day, as a result of which communal riots broke out in Calcutta and other towns and then followed the massacre of men, women and children. Neither sex nor age was spared. The riots spread to different parts of Bengal, Bihar and Punjab. Gandhi went to Noakhali in East Bengal and met Muslims and Hindus and appealed to them not to resort to violence. "It was the cry of outraged woman-hood that had peremptorily called him to Noakhali."<sup>48</sup> Gandhi believed in non-violence and was never in favour of using coercion even to make people good. He said, "...The mind of a man who remains good under compulsion cannot improve, in fact it worsens. and when compulsion is removed, all the defects well up to the surface with even greater force."<sup>49</sup>

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48. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.171. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1949)

49. Harizan, September 29, 1946, p.333.

In March, 1947 Gandhi was enthusing the Muslim minorities of Bihar to have courage and self-confidence. On June 3, 1947 the Plan for the partition of the country was announced by Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India at that time. The Congress accepted it with a heavy heart. Gandhi felt sorry for the inglorious end of his efforts of non-violence. On August 15, 1947 when truncated India got independence, Gandhi was trying to bring the riots at Calcutta under control. He was not in any mood to give a message to the nation. He began a life of fasting and prayers. Towards the end of August 1947 there was a fresh outburst of riots. Gandhi went on a fast unto death, which he said, would be broken after the communal riots were over. Due to this there was a temporary ease in the situation. He came back to Delhi on September 9, 1947 and appealed to both the Governments of India and Pakistan to protect their minorities. Gandhi also inspired the people to remain firm in their places and not to fear death.

Due to the increasing tension Gandhi decided to go on another fast which continued until the 18th January 1948 and was broken only after an assurance was given to him by a representative Committee for the purposes of peace that the minorities would not be disturbed in Delhi. This was the last fast of Gandhi. On January 20, 1948 a bomb was thrown outside the residence of Gandhi, a portion of the Birla House at New Delhi but he was not even critical of the person doing this deed. Gandhi was a moral force for "whatever else Gandhi was, he was essentially a moral force whose appeal to the conscience of man is both universal and lasting." 50 He was a

practical man also for, "He had pledged himself to do or die." 51

It is really strange that a man who strove for non-violence and peace throughout his life should have been killed by the violent deed of a Hindu. When Gandhi died on January 30, 1948 Jawaharlal Nehru spoke from the A.I.R. New Delhi, "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere and I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it...Our beloved Leader Bapu as we call him, the father of our nation, is no more...The light has gone out, I said and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts...A mad man has put an end to his life...." 52

Professor Albert Einstein remarked, "...In our time of utter moral decadence he was the only statesman to stand for a higher human relationship in the political sphere." 53.

51. Krishna Kripalani, Gandhi, A Life, p.198.

52. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, pp.9-10.

53. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.10.

## CHAPTER II

### SOURCES OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S NON-VIOLENCE

Non-violence has been preached throughout the past ages though it is also a fact that violence has been followed as the normal routine in different countries. It is a fact also that whenever there was violence, whether in the days of Mahabharata or during the I or II World Wars, there was a feeling of hatred towards it afterwards. The Varnashramdharma or the division of the society into different castes also emphasized it. In it there was an effort to make everyone a brahmin, who was supposed not to resist evil by force. If Kshatriyas were permitted the use of force, that was to be done in a truthful and honest manner. This tradition found expression in the Upanishads also. Among the sources of inspiration and influences upon the character of Gandhi, there were many factors like Jainism, Ramnam, the Gita, the Sermon On The Mount, Ruskin's 'Unto This Last', Thoreau's 'On Civil Disobedience' and count Leo Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom Of God Is Within You', to mention only a few. "It should not be forgotten that this...believer has translated Ruskin and Plato and quotes Thoreau, admires Mazzini, reads Edward Carpenter, and that he is, in short familiar with the best that Europe and America have produced."<sup>54</sup> It is true that Gandhi's philosophy took basic sustenance from religion and spirituality which was the effect of his early breeding and caressing protection of his mother in the early days. Then he was influenced by Raychandbhai. "His moral sensibility and his religious consciousness, too, were at least as much influenced by Jesus, Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau as by Jainisim

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54. Romain Rolland, Mahatma Gandhi, The Man Who Became One With The Universal Being, p.28.  
(Shivalal Agarwal & Co., Agra)

and Gita and the lessons received from his Gujarati jeweller friend Raychandbhai." 55

Raychandbhai, apart from being a jeweller, was a poet also. He lived at Bombay where Gandhi met him. Gandhi was impressed with the simple way of life of Raychandbhai who was impatient for self-realization. He was a man of flawless character and was equipped with a wonderful memory. His daily life had an overtone of high religiousness. He was a truthful man with noble ideas. These impressed Gandhi much but Gandhi did not adopt him as his Guru. It is customary in Hindu Society to choose a Guru without which, they say, salvation or "Moksha" is impossible. Gandhi did not choose to have a Guru but he was much impressed with the qualities of Raychandbhai who had read the scriptures in detail. "The following lines of Muktanand were always on his lips and engraved on the tablets of his heart: 'I shall think myself blessed only when I see Him in everyone of my daily acts; Verily He is the thread, which supports Muktanand's life'." 56

Raychandbhai in his business was a dealer in diamonds and pearls. He wanted to see God in person. He always maintained a balance in his personality. At the early stage Gandhi did not take much interest in the religious topics but even then his discussions with Raychandbhai were memorable. "I have tried to meet the heads of various faiths,

55. Krishna Kripalani, Gandhi, A Life, p.62.

56. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.64.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)



and I must say that no one else has ever made on me the impression that Raychan' bhai did." 57

When Gandhi was doubtful of the perfection of Hinduism because untouchability formed a part of it and when he was in a fix whether to embrace Christianity, he wrote a letter to Raychandbhai. He got some mental peace when he got a reply from him with the suggestion that he should further "study Hinduism 'more deeply'." 58 Thus Raychandbhai continued to guide Gandhi for quite some time regarding his religious studies. When Gandhi was still in South Africa, he was actively thinking about Brahmcharya about which also he derived inspiration from his correspondence with Raychandbhai. He had told him once that milk gave rise to animal passions. Hence Gandhi began to think of giving it up. Another deep-seated effect on the personality of Gandhi was left by 'Ramnam', 'Ramraksha Stotra', 'Ram Charitmanas' and 'Mahabharata'. In the school he had learnt everything but religion. Interest in religion came to him from his mother and nurse, Rambha. Gandhi, as a child, used to fear the ghosts and spirits very much. This fear did not continue throughout life and was short-lived.

His nurse, Rambha, told him to repeat Ramnam to get rid of this fear and Gandhi had a greater belief in Rambha than in Ramnam. So due to his faith in his nurse he began to have great faith in Ramnam and this belief remained with him throughout his life. "To me... Rama, described as the Lord of Sita, son of Dasharatha, is the

57. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.64.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)
58. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.99.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

all powerful essence whose name, inscribed in the heart, removes all suffering - mental, moral and physical." 59 It became the panacea for him for all evils and ills. Gandhi wrote, "Our religion has its source from God within. And if we will be true to our God, we will never forsake the faith we derive from Him. With God as our Guide, Master, Ruler in everything that we may do, we can defy the whole world's opposition and stick to our faith." 60 He learnt 'Ramraksha' also in the family atmosphere and Gandhi was always proud to read it with the correct pronunciation. He further says, "I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will...and, in the end, she became my teacher in non-violence." 61 Above all a very great effect was left on his personality by Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas which was recited by a great devotee of Ram, Latha Maharaj of Bileshwar, for his ailing father. The story went that Latha Maharaj got cured of his leprosy by a constant repetition of Ramnam. Gandhi believed the truth of it and hence his faith in Ramnam was further strengthened. This devotee had a very fine style of reciting the (chopais) quatrains of Ramcharitmanas and his audience, including Gandhi, who was only 13 years old then, used to be spell-bound.

This faith in God, Ram, in him, was a permanent feature and whenever he would get suggestions from his friends and hosts in England to take meat, he, in utter disgust, would remember the name of God, for relief. For complete thought control also, i.e. to

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59. Harijan, June 2, 1946, p.158.

60. Harijan, February 6, 1937, p.413.

61. Harijan, December 24, 1938, p.394.

desist from evil thinking the Indian philosophers and reformers in the past suggested certain Mantras like Ramnam. Gandhi used to practise it while observing Brahmcharya. During all the periods of fasting in Gandhi's life, Ramnam and Ramayana remained a source of inspiration and encouragement to him. He could come out successful even in the most difficult ordeal due to it. His death even became a smooth affair because he uttered the name of 'Ram' at the fag end of the journey of his life. Gandhi interpreted the mind of Valmiki and Vas by saying that they represented the inner duel between the superior and inferior forces in a man. Gandhi considered Tulsidas's Ramcharitmans as, "the greatest book in all devotional literature." 62

In the Mahabharata where, after the bloody war, only seven persons survived, it is shown that the result of violence is frustrating and not good. Gandhi says, "The Mahabharata depicts for all time the eternal struggle that goes on daily between the forces of good and evil in the human breast...." 63 Again, "The Mahabharata and Ramayana...are undoubtedly allegories as the internal evidence shows...Each epic describes the eternal duel that goes on between the forces of darkness and of light." 64 In the Mahabharata it is shown that if there is a war and violence, foul means will certainly be used. Gandhi says, "It is well known that I have never looked upon Mahabharata as a mere record of earthly warfare.

62. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.24.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959, Popular Edition)

63. M.K. Gandhi, Non Violence In Peace And War, Vol.I, p.137.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

64. M.K. Gandhi, Non Violence In Peace And War, Vol.I, p.143.

In the garb of an epic the poet has described the eternal warfare within the individual as well as in society, between Truth and Untruth, Violence and Non-violence, Right and Wrong. Looking at the epic even superficially one can understand how the great Vyasa has demonstrated that in this war the victor was no better off than the vanquished. Out of that concourse of warriors only seven remained to tell the tale...The author has shown clearly, too, that in armed warfare the contending parties are certain to stoop to meanness and trickery." <sup>65</sup> In the Mahabharata again Bhishma Pitamah is all praise for Ahimsa. He says, "Ahimsa is the highest religion. It is again the highest penance. It is also the highest truth from which all duty proceeds." <sup>66</sup>

Another effect on the personality of Gandhi was left by the Gita. As a matter of fact his father would recite a few verses from the Gita aloud also. In the early days of his life, Gandhi never got an opportunity of hearing the recitation of the Gita from an interesting devotee. Later on when Madanmohan Malviya read it for him during one of his fasts, he became much interested in it and regretted the missed opportunities. In the second year of his stay in England Gandhi met two theosophists who were unmarried. They mentioned to him the Gita. Actually they were reading at that time Edwin Arnold's translation of the Gita, 'The song Celestial'. Gandhi was invited by them to read the Gita with them. Gandhi was not confident of his reading because he had not read the original

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65. M.K. Gandhi, Non Violence In Peace And War, Vol.I, p.359.

66. अहिंसा परमो धर्मः अहिंसा परमं तपः ।  
अहिंसा परमं सत्यम्, ततो धर्मः प्रवर्तते ॥

(Anushashana Parva, ed., P.P.S. Sastri) C IV, 25, as quoted in G.V. Dhawan, Political Philosophy Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.12. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951)

either in Sanskrit or Gujarati. He told them this fact but despite it he was ready to read the original in the Sanskrit language. A few verses in the second chapter impressed him most. These verses read,

"If one

Ponders on objects of the sense,

there springs -

Attraction; from attraction grows desire,

Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds

Recklessness; then the memory - all betrayed

Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,

Till purpose, mind and man are all undone." 67

After thinking over these lines, Gandhi began to feel and believe that the Gita was a monumental book where the exposition and interpretation of Truth was given in the best possible manner. After a few years it came to possess him completely mentally when it became a continuous source of inspiration to him. After having studied it, he realised that "renunciation was the highest form of religion." 68 In 1903 he used to read the Gita with a number of friends. It became his greatest guide and he felt like committing to memory most of its portions and for this he utilized the morning time. At the time of cleaning his teeth and bath he began to learn verse after verse and he thus learnt thirteen chapters by heart. Gandhi read the Gita for the solution of the most baffling problems, for he wrote, "...but

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67. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.48.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

68. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.49.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

to me the Gita became an infallible guide of conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference. Just as I turned to the English Dictionary for the meanings of English words that I did not understand, I turned to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. Words like 'aparigraha' (non-possession) and 'Samabhava' (equability) gripped me." 69

The main problem and question before Gandhi was how to cultivate the practice and habit of non-possession. He began to think that he could not follow Him, the Lord, unless he gave up all. The idea of richmen, the owners of wealth, with great hold over materialistic goods, acting as the trustees of the nation, was born out of this tremendous faith in the concept of non-possession, given in the Gita. Under the impression of this philosophy he decided not to take an insurance policy and in the same context he wrote to his brother that he could give no more money to him as whatever he had or he was to save in the future would be utilized for the welfare of the community. Sometimes he acted against the principles of the Gita in the zeal for reform when once he gave about ₹ 1000 on loan to a lady who came forward with a scheme of starting a vegetarian restaurant. This money could not be recovered and Gandhi has written, "...in thus lending trust money I had disobeyed the cardinal teaching of the Gita, viz. the duty of a man of equipoise to act without desire for the fruit. The error became for me a beacon light of warning." 70 The

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69. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.195.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

70. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.197.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

Gita came to the rescue of Gandhi very much during fasting but Gandhi believed that fasting was useless unless it led to self-restraint because if self-restraint was not the end of fasting, animal passions would increase. In this context the particular verse from the II chapter of the Bhagwad Gita is relevant.

\*For a man who is fasting his senses  
Outwardly, the sense-objects disappear,  
Leaving the yearning behind; but when  
He has seen the Highest,  
Even the yearning disappears."<sup>71</sup>

Gandhi himself translated the Gita from sanskrit into Gujarati and then Mahadev Desai translated it into English. Gandhi saw great virtues in the Gita and he tried to mould and shape his daily conduct according to its principles. To him the Gita was "a spiritual reference book."<sup>72</sup> Once he spoke to Christian missionaries on July 28, 1925 at Calcutta when he gave his impression about the Gita thus, "...Though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity...Hindusim, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the Bhagwad Gita and the Upanishads that I miss even in the Sermon On The Mount...when doubt haunts me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagwad Gita, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full

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71. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.245.  
(Wavajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

72. Mahadev Desai, The Gospel Of Selfless Action OR The Gita According To Gandhi, p.126.  
(Wavajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951)

of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagwad Gita."<sup>73</sup> The Gita is concerned with self-realization and its ways. It deals with the 'nishkama karma', an action without caring for the fruit. Gandhi interpreted the Gita by saying that, "religion must rule even our worldly pursuits," because, "...what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion."<sup>74</sup> Gandhi said that to him "The last nineteen verses of the second chapter"<sup>75</sup> were the key to the interpretation of the Gita. The practice of Ahimsa is necessary to the unattached.

According to the teachings of the Gita, Gandhi began to try to achieve the ideal of a Karma Yogi in South Africa. Gandhi has himself written of the qualities of a Karmayogi. "He is a devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who is pure, who is versed in action yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up by praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and

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73. Young India, II, pp.1078-79.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1927)

74. Mahadev Desai, The Gospel Of Selfless Action Or The Gita According To Gandhi, p.132.

75. Young India, II, p.935.



solitude, who has a disciplined reason. Such a devotion is inconsistent with the existence at the same time of strong attachments."<sup>76</sup> Due to the teachings of the Gita, Gandhi believed that man is the maker of his own destiny. He had learnt from the Gita again detachment which he wanted to practise both in his personal life and public activities. "In the Gita continuous concentration on God is the king of sacrifices."<sup>77</sup>

He was impressed with Buddhism and Jainism also. As a matter of fact in the brahminical religion there came to be elaborate rituals and ceremonies and sacrifices of animals etc. which were opposed both by Buddhism and Jainism. Buddhism lays emphasis upon Ahimsa. "...it was a great merit of Buddhism that it preached compassion to all alike."<sup>78</sup> Buddha's ideal of Ahimsa was quite high. Gandhi wrote, "Once we began to compare the life of Jesus with that of Buddha. 'Look at Gautama's compassion!' said I. 'It was not confined to mankind, it was extended to all living beings...'"<sup>79</sup> Buddha believed in loving even that person who hates you. Gandhi carried further the traditions of king Ashoka also. Ashoka followed non-violence in his statecraft. "No one has combined energy and benevolence, justice and charity, as he did. He was the living embodiment of his own time, and he comes

76. Louis Fischer, Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.35.

77. Ronald Duncan, ed., Selected Writings Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.40. (Faber and Faber Ltd., London)

78. Paul Masson Oursel, Ancient India And Indian Civilization, p.104. (Lakshmi Book Store, New Delhi - 1967)

79. Shriman Narayan, ed., The Selected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.I, p.238. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1963)

before us as quite a modern figure. In the course of a long reign he achieved what seems to us to be a mere aspiration of the visionary; enjoying the greatest possible material power, he organized peace. Far beyond his vast dominions he realized what has been the dream of some religions - universal order, an order embracing mankind."<sup>80</sup>

The Jains believe that in the whole universe there are innumerable visible and invisible bodies with souls. The association of soul with a body is the cause of misery and to achieve Mukti, the soul should be separated from the body which is possible only when one gets rid of Karmas. This can be done by following the path of right knowledge, right insight and right conduct. Under right conduct there are five vows out of which Ahimsa or non-killing is one of the most important. The others are truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. Jains lay much emphasis upon Ahimsa. "Self mortification as an antecedent means and understanding as the ultimate means of deliverance make up the programme, negative rather than constructive, of Jain austerity."<sup>81</sup> Jains laid much emphasis upon the life of non-human beings also. Gandhi, though influenced by Jainism, laid emphasis upon the positive side of Ahimsa. Gandhi belonged to the Jain tradition of Gujarat. He himself was a Vaishnav and his parents were orthodox Vaishnavas. There was great belief in Jainism in the Gujarat of those days and it had much effect on various people in different walks of life. Jains under the impact of non-violence could not bear the very idea of meat-eating. Thus when Gandhi cultivated the company

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80. Paul Masson Oursel, Ancient India And Indian Civilization, p.38.

81. Paul Masson Oursel, Ancient India And Indian Civilization, p.152.

of a mohammedan, he was hesitant/due to these traditions. Later on he was a thorough vegetarian and it was mostly due to this impression on his young mind.

Another factor which influenced Gandhi and moulded his ways of thinking was the Sermon On The Mount in the Bible. Towards the end of his second year in England, Gandhi came across an Englishman from Manchester. He was a Christian and he requested Gandhi to read the Bible. Gandhi could not like The Old Testament but, reading the New Testament he had a different experience. The Sermon On The Mount impressed him most and then after reading it he found it equally effective and important as the Gita. He was immensely pleased with the verses, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever 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." 82 Gandhi in his Satyagraha movement was much impressed with Jesus and his teachings. He said, "I may say that I have never been interested in a historical Jesus. I should not care if it was proved by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that (what) was narrated in the Gospel was a figment of the writer's imagination. For the Sermon On The Mount would still be true for me." 83

Gandhi further said about it, "The verses, 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil etc...' delighted me beyond measure...." 84

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82. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.49.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

83. Young India, December 31, 1931, p.429.

84. J.P. Goyal, Studies In Modern Indian Political Thought - Gandhi An Interpretation, p.3.  
(Kitsab Mahal, Allahabad, 1964)

About Christianity he said, "As my contact with real christians i.e. men living in fear of God, increased, I saw that the Sermon On The Mount was the whole of christianity for him who wanted to live a christian life...." <sup>85</sup> "Thou shalt love thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" are important commandments of the Old Testament. To these Jesus adds, "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." <sup>86</sup> The greatest practical example of non-violence is given by Jesus when he says on the Cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." <sup>87</sup> That is why "Gandhi rejected the atom and grasped the Sermon On The Mount. He was a nuclear infant and an ethical giant. He knew nothing about killing and much about living in the 20th Century." <sup>88</sup>

Thoreau also impressed Gandhi. Thoreau believed in cooperating with all that was good and non-cooperating with what was evil. When Gandhi was imprisoned in South Africa in connection with Asiatic Registration Act, he borrowed a copy of Thoreau's book 'On Civil Disobedience' from the library of the prison and he was impressed with

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85. Young India, December 31, 1931, p.429.

86. Jesus Christ, New Testament, Mathew, V, 43-45.

87. Jesus Christ, New Testament, Luke XXIII, 34.  
(The British And Foreign Bible Society, London, 1952)

88. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.349.

it. Gandhi wrote, "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self regulated, no representation is necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least."<sup>89</sup>

Above all the following piece from his famous essay impressed him most, "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...."<sup>90</sup> Further "As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body. I say that the state was half-witted, that it was 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."<sup>91</sup> It was believed by most

89. Young India, July 2, 1931, p.162.

90. Louis Fischer, Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.87.

91. Louis Fischer, Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.87.

that Gandhi had borrowed his word Satyagraha from Thoreau's essay 'On Civil Disobedience' but Gandhi refuted this argument. Henry David Thoreau was a poet and essayist and was born in 1817. He was a close friend of Emerson and had studied the Gita and the Upanishads. He was a thinker who hated the slavery of the Negroes and unreflecting respect for all traditions. He had constructed his hut with his own hands at Walden Pond at Concord, Massachusetts. For his different needs he did work with his own hands and was self-sufficient in his needs of food etc. in a highly natural atmosphere.

He believed that one should have the quality of distinguishing between the right and the wrong and of supporting only what was right. Thoreau was highly unconventional in his ideas. His concept of democracy was that it was not the majority which was always in the right. The minority was wise and right invariably. "His program was 'peaceful revolution'." <sup>92</sup> To him there was a very intimate relationship between belief and action, means and ends. Mere preaching without practice was meaningless and Gandhi also believed in it. To him, the fundamental human problem was to translate one's beliefs into actions. Gandhi was one with Ruskin in believing that human nature was noble and good, that character was superior to intelligence. Ruskin believed, "the inherent divinity in man is capable of blossoming into justice and justice into beauty. If man realizes his own nature which is spiritual, truth, beauty and goodness must follow. It makes one 'not merely love but diligently love justice, the love which seeks diligently, that is to say, choosingly and by preference to all things else'." <sup>93</sup>

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92. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.89.

93. V. Lakshmi Menon, Ruskin And Gandhi, p.11.  
(Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, Rajghat Varanashi, 1965)

Gandhi said, "Three moderns have left a deep impress on my life, and captivated me: Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book 'The Kingdom of God is within you; and Ruskin by his 'Unto This Last'." <sup>94</sup> While going to Durban, Gandhi was seen off at the Railway Station by Mr. Polak who gave him a copy of Ruskin's 'Unto This Last'. When Gandhi once began reading it, he continued to do so throughout the journey. "...It seemed to express his own deepest convictions, but it also suggested to him an idea that had never struck him before and greatly appealed to him - that the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts man is the life really worth living. We felt ready at once to put this to the test of practice." <sup>95</sup> He began to plan to shape the pattern of his life according to the spirit of 'Unto This Last'. Gandhi had not read Ruskin before. As a matter of fact as a student he would confine his studies only to the prescribed text books and would never study the books outside this narrow limit.

So Gandhi did not read many books because after he came to the active life of politics he did not get sufficient time to luxuriate in the world of ideas through books. He did only limited reading but whatever he studied, he grasped well. 'Unto This Last' was one of those books which changed the life of Mahatma Gandhi completely. He translated it also in Gujarati, giving it the title 'Sarvodaya' which means welfare of all. Gandhi saw in this book the expression, in black and white, of those ideas and principles in which he believed and that is why he was so much impressed with it. He said, "I had begun to pay homage to it (bread labour) after reading Ruskin's 'Unto

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94. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.65.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

95. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.35.

This Last." 96 "The teachings of Unto This Last I understood to be:  
 (1) The good of the individual is contained in the good of all.  
 (2) That the lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as-  
 much 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  
 the handicraftsman is the life worth living." 97

After this Gandhi was completely changed in his thinking and then he became impatient to put these teachings into practice. He established his Phoenix Farm after being impressed with these ideas alone. The greatest contribution of these ideas has been that Gandhi realized that manual labour was not degrading. To him then self-sufficiency and self-help were in themselves, elevating and these left a deep and ennobling effect on his personality. The concept of the dignity of labour and the duties of the rich towards the society - all became more clear in his mind and it will not be too much to mention here that the study of 'Unto This Last' decided the future course of action for Gandhi in several spheres. It was one of those books that left a permanent and deep impression on the mind of Gandhi. Another influence on Gandhi was that of Count Leo Tolstoy. Gandhi said, "I made too an intensive study of Tolstoy's books...I began to realize more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love." 93

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96. R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao, The Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.198.  
 (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1947)

97. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.221.  
 (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

98. Shriman Narayan, ed., The Selected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.237.



The first time Gandhi heard anything about Tolstoy was when he visited Paris to see the exhibition there in 1890. The greatest attraction there was the Eiffel Tower, which was 1000 feet high and was an iron structure. Tolstoy had criticized it by saying that it was not a piece of art but the product of human folly. Gandhi wrote a letter to his son, Manilal, on March 25, 1909 from the Volksrust prison, South Africa. In it he gave instructions that Maganlal Bhai should be told to study Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom Of God Is Within You'. "Gandhi read Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom Of God Is Within You' and said that it gave his conviction of satyagraha 'a permanent form'. In 1909 he wrote a long letter to Tolstoy, who noted in his diary that he had received a pleasant letter from a Hindu of the Transvaal." 99 Tolstoy was a man who practised what he preached. He was born in 1828 in Russia in a wealthy family and had earned a great reputation as the author of 'War And Peace', 'Anna Karenina' etc. He sacrificed his luxurious life for a simple life at the age of fifty seven. What troubled him was the way of life of the people. He was perturbed by his aristocratic way of living and so gave a major portion of his wealth and property to his wife and children and devoted his time and energies to social affairs.

He became curious about God which made him humble. He wished to establish a close association between his actions and beliefs and hence simple life devoid of violence was preferred by him. This also meant reducing one's wants to the barest minimum. He, in his opposition to money, refused to accept even the Nobel Prize. He criticised christianity to a great extent by saying that cruelty was done to

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99. Homer A. Jack, The Gandhi Reader, p.500,  
(Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1956)

the followers by the church. According to him the Orthodox Church with its belief in idol worship was no better. Hence he gave the title, "The Kingdom Of God Is Within You" to his famous book. He was doubtful of the utility and validity of Governments. They served no purpose for the society due to their policy of war mongering. He prescribed resistance to evil by inflicting suffering on one self. By such an action one is freed from the burden of paying lip-service to what is evil. Moreover this leaves a cleaner atmosphere because the society is purged of what is bad and evil in it due to the sacrifice of an individual. Tolstoy's preaching was that one should peacefully disobey the bad Government even at the cost of self suffering. One should always make efforts to free oneself. "The law, that to live, man must work, first came home to me upon reading Tolstoy's writing on bread labour...." 100

One is what one makes oneself. One should learn to sacrifice for the sake of Truth. The first real contact between Gandhi and Tolstoy was established when Gandhi wrote a letter to Tolstoy on October 1, 1909 from London at his address at Yasnaya Polyana. Gandhi wrote in this letter about the Civil Disobedience Movement which was going on at that time in the Transvaal. Tolstoy was deeply moved and expressed his sentiments against such an unjust treatment to the poor and helpless which, he said, was universal. Gandhi again wrote to Tolstoy on April 4, 1910 from Johannesburg and sent also a copy of his book 'Hind Swaraj' or 'Indian Home Rule' in order to get Tolstoy's comments. Tolstoy, despite his illness at that time, wrote a brief letter of appreciation regarding his ideas about passive resistance. He also began to address Gandhi as his brother. Gandhi had already

established Tolstoy Farm in South Africa.

Tolstoy's philosophy has been given the name of christian anarchism. He feels that all the human problems can be solved by love. Tolstoy thought it a great crime if one tried to impose one's will on others. Tolstoy condemned state and also violence. Gandhi highly valued the role of Tolstoy in shaping his ideas. Both Gandhi and Tolstoy believed in the search after Truth. "Truth and non-violence are the same thing. The one includes the other. If anyone vowed to non-violence speaks or acts untruth, he will be violating his vow. If a man dedicated to truth commits violence, he will sacrifice truth. Even if a man refuses to reply, out of fear, he will be violating the vow of non-violence."<sup>101</sup> He believed as Gandhi also did that before social uplift, self-improvement of an individual was very necessary. Gandhi and Tolstoy believed in a life full of morality and marked with simplicity and celibacy. Tolstoy, on the eve of his death wrote to Gandhi, "...I want to tell others what I feel so particularly clearly and what to my mind is of great importance namely, that which is called passive resistance, but which, in reality is nothing else than the teaching of love, uncorrupted by false interpretations."<sup>102</sup> He also said that love was the highest law in the life of a human being. If there is no love, violence rules supreme in its absence.

Gandhi would be seeking the advice of the sage of Yasnaya Polyana, Mr. Tolstoy, about the Transvaal campaign. Tolstoy wrote to

101. Shriman Narayan, ed., The Selected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.V, p.385.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1968)

102. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.100.

Gandhi a letter under the caption 'A Letter To A Hindu' in which he elaborately dealt with the concept and philosophy and validity of non-resistance to evil. His thesis, which impressed Gandhi much, was, that whatever troubles existed in the society were due to hatred. If people begin to love one another, there would be no trouble in the world. It was a wonder to Tolstoy that a handful of Englishmen should have enslaved millions of Indians. He felt that Indians, themselves, were responsible for that undesirable state of affairs. They should have resisted that evil without force or hatred. If one uses force and hatred always, there is a perpetual blood-bath in the form of a major war or a revolution. Gandhi always addressed Tolstoy with respect. It is a marvellous fact of history that these two persons, with a difference of age, should have been worried with the same problems, the tyranny of the superior over the inferior. It is still surprising that they never came closer together physically but they had a great spiritual affinity.

Gandhi was much impressed with religion. He wrote, "It can never be a matter of argument. If you would have me convince others by arguments I am floored. But I can tell you this that I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. I can also testify that I may live without air and water but not without Him. You 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."<sup>103</sup> Again he said, "To say that God permits evil in this world may not be pleasing to the ear. But if he is held responsible for the good, it follows that he has to be

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103. Narijan, May 14, 1938, p.109.

responsible for the evil too. Did not God permit Ravana to exhibit unparalleled strength? Perhaps the root cause of the perplexity arises from a lack of the real understanding of what God is. God is not a person. He transcends description."<sup>104</sup> According to him again, "without religion life would be reduced to merely a 'sound and fury signifying nothing'."<sup>105</sup> Again he said about religion, "By religion I do not mean formal religion or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker...My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself."<sup>106</sup>

He felt "that those who worship God in name only are not believers but those who do His will."<sup>107</sup> He felt that religion "which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion."<sup>108</sup> According to him, "religion was a personal matter and if we succeeded in confining it to the personal plane, all would be well in our political life."<sup>109</sup> He further said, "I do not want my house to be walled on all sides...I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any...Mine is not a religion of the prison house."<sup>110</sup> To him the realisation of God was very important. "Mere

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104. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.69.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

105. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.IV, pp.387-88.

106. R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao, The Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.64.

107. Harijan, September 1, 1940, p.269.

108. Young India, May 7, 1925, p.164.

109. Harijan, August 31, 1947, p.303.

110. Nirmal Kumar Bose and P.H. Patwardhan, Gandhi And Indian Politics, p.XVI.  
(Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay, 1967)

mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment...Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living force. Our life is of that Force. That force resides in but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway."<sup>111</sup> He had his own interpretation of the Vedas for he said, "the spirit of the Vedas is purity, truth, innocence, chastity, humility, simplicity, forgiveness, godliness and all that makes a man or woman noble and brave."<sup>112</sup>

He further said, "I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran and the Zend Avesta, to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired...I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however, learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense."<sup>113</sup> Gandhi, having been impressed with all these, puts the time-honoured concept of Ahimsa or Non-Violence in a new garb with a different purpose. He was always experimenting upon new avenues where non-violence could be effectively used in the different spheres of life. He applied it to big movements also. To him Satyagraha was the only solution to the problems of the world. "Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction."<sup>114</sup>

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111. Harlian, July 20, 1947, p.240.

112. Young India, January 19, 1921, p.22.

113. Young India, October 6, 1921, p.317.

114. Harlian, July 15, 1939, p.200.

### CHAPTER III

#### MAHATMA GANDHI'S CONCEPT AND TECHNIQUE OF NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhi did not propound a fixed dogma or creed. "There is as yet nothing like Gandhism"<sup>115</sup> but only a Gandhian way and outlook. Gandhi's actions were not guided by any fixed theory. He was always an open minded person who did not like to bind his followers to any set formulae. He said, "I do not claim to have originated any new principle. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems...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. And no elaborate literature or propaganda is needed about it."<sup>116</sup> Gandhi was to some extent an anarchist. He was in favour of individual freedom and was against the highly centralized state. The absolutist school, on the other hand, believing in complete sovereignty thinks that the individual should implicitly obey the laws of the state irrespective of the fact whether they are for the general welfare of society or not. The Pluralists dispute this contention and say that the state does not enjoy any special position in this field. If the laws are alright morally, the individual may obey, otherwise not. "Our first duty", writes Laski, "is to be true to our conscience and we are the more likely to press the state into the service of right the more we fulfil that duty." Gandhi also believed in disobeying the law of the state if it came into conflict with what was right.<sup>117</sup>

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115. J.B. Kripalani, The Gandhian Way, p.162.  
(Vora & Co., Bombay, 1938)

116. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.3.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

117. H.J. Laski, The Grammar of Politics, p.289.  
(George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1951)

He said, "Submission to the state law is the price a citizen pays for his personal liberty. Submission, therefore, to a state wholly or largely unjust is an immoral barter for liberty."<sup>118</sup> To Gandhi social order was to be established on truth and non-violence. Gandhi was a greater revolutionary than even Karl Marx, Lenin etc. because he challenged the very basis of the Western civilization which believes in the supremacy of matter over spirit. Gandhi as a political philosopher is singled out due to his emphasis upon the superiority of the spiritual power over the materialistic. To Gandhi his own life was an unending experiment with truth. It was a life, dedicated to truth and hence it was dynamic. His life and practical experiments in the form of movements give a better understanding of his concept of Ahimsa or Non-violence. He was a Karmayogi, a man of action and he developed his principles both in South Africa and India.

There may be no Gandhism but there is a Gandhian way of life which possesses all the qualities of an ism, a philosophy of life, certain basic principles and techniques of solving national and international tensions. In his concept the principles of love and non-violence and truth are to be upheld always. He says, "...the only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa. The little fleeting glimpses...that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes."<sup>119</sup> The idea and practice of Satyagraha constitute the heart and soul of Gandhi's belief in non-violence. Gandhi believed, "Satyagraha is the greatest means

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118. Young India, January 13, 1927, as quoted in Jag Parvesh Chander, Teachings Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.527. (The Indian Printing Works, Lahore, 1947)

119. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.370. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1929)



of educating the public and awakening the people." 120 Gandhi never believed in coercion and compulsion as elements in Satyagraha. "We must not resort to social boycott of our opponents. It amounts to coercion...The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is intolerable as that of bureaucratic minority." 121 "...there should be no coercion in Khaddar wearing or in anything else." 122 "Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion." 123 Again, "The Satyagrahi's object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong doer." 124

This is his greatest contribution to political thought. It was used by him in his non-violent campaign in South Africa against the brute force there and later on in India. It means truth-force, love-force or soul-force. It means to correct the opponent's error by self-suffering. Satyagraha depends for its success not on the mildness of the adversary but on the capacity of the satyagrahi to suffer until the opponent comes round. It is "a process of educating public opinion such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible." 125 It tries to impress upon the mind of the opponent a sense of justice without harbouring any ill-will towards the opposing party. No resort to physical or military force is there in it. Untruth is sought to be conquered by truth. In order

120. Harlian, October 30, 1943, p.293.

121. Young India, I, p.961.

122. Young India, II, p.507.

123. Harlian, July 8, 1939, p.193.

124. Harlian, March 25, 1939, p.64.

125. Harlian, March 31, 1946, p.64.

to convert the oppressor the satyagrahi has to cheerfully embrace death. Sometimes Satyagraha is a substitute for actual war but the war does not do away with social injustice. Satyagraha is against the policy of tit for tat. Gandhi said this principle was eternal. Buddha preached and practised it. It can be found in the writings of Thoreau, Tolstoy and Ruskin.

Satyagraha is a sort of war, no doubt, but without its ugly aspects. Satyagraha was Gandhi's answer to social, economic and political evils of the society. He practised it in his private life and later on extended it to public affairs. He said, "I am myself daily growing in the knowledge of Satyagraha. I have no text book to consult in time of need, not even the Gita which I have called my dictionary. Satyagraha as conceived by me is a science in the making. It may be that what I claim to be a science may prove to be no science at all and may well prove to be the musings and doings of a fool, if not a mad man. It may be that what is true in Satyagraha is as ancient as the hills."<sup>126</sup> Gandhi started with the basic presumption that fundamentally there was something good about every person and his or her actions in society. This has been the fundamental basis of Gandhi's techniques. Thus Gandhi is different from Hobbes and Machiavelli in his approach because to them human nature was essentially selfish and bad. The peaceful methods of conciliation and negotiation are always open if one starts with love towards one's opponents.

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126. Jag Parvesh Chander, Teachings Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.502.

Gandhi was not an armchair philosopher or politician who merely theorized certain philosophical concepts to be implemented by others. He was of the crowd of men wherever they were fighting injustice. As a matter of fact his ideas were put to practice in different situations and on different occasions. He could never compromise with evil and whenever it existed, he waged an all-out war against it. He said, "There is no such thing as defeat or despair in the dictionary of a man who bases his life on truth and non-violence."<sup>127</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramayya wrote, "Gandhi lives for others. Society is Gandhi's temple, service is his sole form of worship, humanity is his single passion. Truth is his one God and non-violence is his only means of attaining it. His appeal is to the universal of which the local forms an integral factor."<sup>128</sup> Through the non-violent struggle his aim was to attain freedom for the individual from Governmental suppression and also freedom for the exploited and down-trodden nations. Gandhi's religion was truth but he knew that it was very difficult for an ordinary individual to realize Absolute Truth and hence he recommended that one should try in his own limited way to realize relative truth which is truth that is considered to be so by an individual at a particular time. To realize relative truth or Satya one must be a satyagrahi. "What a pure heart feels at a particular time is Truth; by remaining firm on that, undiluted truth can be obtained."<sup>129</sup>

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127. Young India, December 31, 1931, p.426.

128. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi and Gandhism, Vol.I, p.35.  
(Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1943)

129. Harizan, November 27, 1949, p.340.

To Gandhi speech, action, thought-all should be true. There cannot be any politics without truth for him. A man's motto should be the search for truth which can be pursued by doing service to all for which he should be ready to sacrifice his all excepting his principles which are true for him. He wrote, "To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion...To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder...than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms." 130 Good and right relations in society, and political and economic freedom of one's country thus fall under Gandhi's conception of truth. It includes political freedom of other countries also. The people are prone to think of violence as superior to non-violence because the former uses obvious and tangible techniques with backing of dangerous weapons which one can see; while the latter is based upon the soul-force and love and its weapon is spirituality which cannot be seen in the form of weapons by the ordinary man.

Gandhi says, "Brute force has been the ruling factor in the world for thousands of years, and mankind has been reaping its... harvest all along as he who runs may read. There is little hope of anything good coming out of it in the future. If light can come out of darkness, then alone can love emerge from hatred." 131 Non-violence is much superior to violence. Gandhi has drawn a comparison between the two. Says he, "A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is

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130. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.371.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

131. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.289.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1928)

intent upon destroying those whom he considers his enemies, does at least require some rest and has to lay down his arms for a while in every twenty four hours...Not so the votary of truth and non-violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast and they are actively working their way, whether you are awake or whether you are asleep...The panoplied warrior of truth and non-violence is ever and incessantly active." <sup>132</sup> When the body of the late U.S. President Eisenhower lay in State between the two Houses of the Congress, President Nixon remarked that Eisenhower had the ability to see the other party's point of view and he did not hate the other party. <sup>133</sup> This was a Gandhian approach.

Non-violence is much superior to violence for "...if there is sufficient non-violence developed in any single person, he should be able to discover the means of combating violence, no matter how wide-spread or severe, within his jurisdiction...Such ahimsa as has been developed in me has been found enough to cope with situations that have hitherto arisen." <sup>134</sup> Gandhi's Satyagraha means that success can come only to truth and never to untruth. Truth exists while untruth does not. So there is no point in the victory of a factor which does not exist. "If untruth does not so much as exist, its victory is out of the question. And truth being that which is can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of Satyagraha in a nutshell." <sup>135</sup> Gandhi distinguished his Satyagraha from Passive

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132. Young India, December 31, 1931, p.426.

133. Broadcast on the B.R.C. World Service at 5.30 A.M. on 31.3.1969.

134. Harjan, July 9, 1939, p.192.

135. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.433.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1928)

Resistance. "Satyagraha is dynamic, passive resistance is static. Passive resistance acts negatively and suffers reluctantly and infructuously. Satyagraha acts positively and suffers with cheerfulness...and makes suffering fruitful." 136 Romain Rolland says, "No one in the world has greater aversion towards passivity than this indefatigable fighter, who represents one of the most heroic types of 'resisters'. The soul of his movement is 'active resistance' by means of the inflamed energy of love, faith and sacrifice. This triple energy is expressed in the word 'Satyagraha'." 137

Even then Gandhi had no set theory about Satyagraha for he said, "I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked out the science of Satyagraha in its entirety." 138 Gandhi had interpreted Ahimsa in his own way. He said, "Ahimsa is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain the expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries." 139 Ahimsa means absence of killing but to Gandhi it was not injuring anything in this world in action, word or even in thought. A true follower of Ahimsa does not think ill of others, and he does not use a language in his relations with others, which injures their sentiments. Not only should the thinking be on the lines of non-violence but there should also be a practical implementation of the plans according to it. "The ambiguous attitude towards non-violence of most of his colleagues was well known to him, yet he chose to shut his eyes to it. In the case of his Khilafatist allies

136. Harlian, June 25, 1938, p.164.

137. Romain Rolland, Mahatma Gandhi, p.33.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1922)

138. Harlian, May 27, 1939, p.136.

139. Harlian, May 6, 1939, p.113.

he was under no illusion; they stated explicitly that they adopted non-violence merely as a tactic and he did not expect more of them, recognizing that 'ahimsa' had little appeal for Muslims. But for Congress under his leadership, non-violence was supposed to be a principle." 140 It was a straight-forward policy of the Khilafatists when they state it like that.

Under his concept of Ahimsa, nobody is to be thought of as enemy or if in any quarter one thinks himself to be the enemy of the follower of Ahimsa, this follower is not to think ill of him. The word 'Ahimsa' is negative in its meaning but positive in its approach to life i.e. doing good to others. It is sacrifice, love and kindness of the highest order. Its purpose is to create a genial atmosphere of goodwill. This conception of love is not of the ordinary variety where the lover expects a response from the beloved. It is love of the idealistic quality where love scenes are enacted but one loves without expecting a single gesture in this direction from the opposite side. Ahimsa, to Gandhi, is the soul-force in human life. As the soul can exist and does exist separately from the body, in the same manner time and space cannot be a bar in the way of Ahimsa. The search for truth demands continuous efforts and hard labour. Gandhi said that the science of Satyagraha "has come to me...by scientific research. It is the result of the hardest labour a human being is capable of. I have applied to this research all the skill of a scientist." 141 It does not require physical aids. Gandhi

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140. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.280.  
(The English Universities Press, London, 1968)

141. Chandrashankar Shukla, Conversations Of Gandhiji, p.41.  
(Vora & Co., Bombay, 1949)

felt that Ahimsa was the only realistic force in life. If Ahimsa is to be successfully used, there should be faith in God and love and realization of the fact that the soul exists independently of the body.

Gandhi believed that the governing force of the whole universe is love because, despite destruction, life continues. Hatred is the greatest cause of destruction. Ahimsa holds good for all the various situations in life. Ahimsa must be pursued and followed in every situation in life without any exception. Gandhi believed that there was not much scope for violence in Ahimsa because if it is there, Ahimsa remains insufficient. He believed, "Ahimsa must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible."<sup>142</sup> Further, he said, "I know only one way - the way of ahimsa. The way of himsa goes against my grain. I do not want to cultivate the power to inculcate himsa...."<sup>143</sup> Again he believed, "Ahimsa is not the goal. Truth is the goal. But we have no means of realizing truth in human relationship except through the practice of Ahimsa. A steady pursuit of Ahimsa is inevitably bound to truth-not so violence. That is why I swear by Ahimsa. Truth came naturally to me. Ahimsa I acquired after a struggle...."<sup>144</sup> Regarding the persons who resort to violence Gandhi said, that he did not believe "in imprisoning by way of punishment even those who commit violence. My creed of non-violence does not favour the punishment of thieves and dacoits and even murderers. I cannot in

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142. Harijan, June 24, 1939, p.174.

143. Young India, October 11, 1928, p.342.

144. Harijan, June 23, 1946, p.199.



all conscience agree to any one being sent to gallows...If I had my way I would fling open doors of prisons and discharge even murderers." 145

This is also certain about Ahimsa that "non-violence in politics is a new weapon in the process of evolution." 146 But even then a full description of Ahimsa is impossible for "any such (treatise) during my lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would fail to give a complete exposition of Ahimsa. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of Ahimsa." 147 Gandhi believed firmly that violence cannot be followed in day to day life. He observed, "I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the 'rishis' and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute...The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law, to the strength of the spirit." 148 The meaning of Ahimsa sounds negative but there is a reason for this. People believe that for the existence and continuance of life some amount of himsa or violence is there. Ahimsa emphasizes the giving up of violence. It also lays emphasis upon the freedom of the soul from the human body in flesh and blood. To Gandhi, "Ahimsa means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word and deed." 149 In its negative sense, Ahimsa

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145. D.G. Tendulkar & Others, ed., Gandhiji, p.381.

146. Harjan, October 23, 1937, p.308.

147. Harjan, March 3, 1946, pp.28-29.

148. W.K. Rose, Selections From Gandhi, p.142.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

149. Harjan, September 7, 1935, p.234.

means not harming the others by the use of harsh words or by injuring the sentiments of others even if they think you to be their enemy. One should not have any ill will towards the other. Gandhi thought, "Exploitation is the essence of violence."<sup>150</sup> For Gandhi the true test of violence is the intention of violence or doing harm. When some living being is destroyed to lessen his pain or for his welfare, it is not himsa or violence. If some one is having intense pain and not dying, arranging death for him will be a help. He believed, "Should my child be attacked by rabies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony I would consider it my duty to take his life."<sup>151</sup> Here Gandhi is a bit too idealistic in his approach. It is well known that, sometimes, even very stout persons have intense and unbearable pain but it is not a permanent feature. Diseases come and go away in the human system which, of course, sometimes meets its death also. But this should not mean that to relieve a man from pain in this temporary phase, his life should be taken. If this idealistic measure is implemented, society may be deprived of some of its choicest and ablest sons and daughters.

Some authors like Bernard Shaw considered Gandhi's Ahimsa as something negative.<sup>152</sup> But as a matter of fact it is a positive doctrine where love is central to the whole concept. It is slightly different from St. Paul's concept of love and also from its ordinary meaning in daily life. St. Paul confined his love to human beings

150. Harlian, November 4, 1939, p.331.

151. Young India, II, p.978.

152. R. Fulton Miller, Gandhi, The Holy Man, pp.160-62., as quoted by G.V. Dhawan, Political Philosophy Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.72. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951)

only while Gandhi goes a step further when he includes other objects like insects, flowers and plants also in his concept. Then in the ordinary sense love means loving an object which is good but to Gandhi love is absolute where the person, loving, imposes suffering on his self, irrespective of the fact whether the object or the other party is good or bad. According to him, "True love consists in transferring itself from the body to the dweller within and then necessarily realizing the oneness of all life inhabiting numberless bodies." <sup>153</sup> Again, "The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him." <sup>154</sup> Human beings have no right to destroy that life which they cannot create and universal love means fearlessness also which involves the practice of not killing of the other creatures even on the slightest pretext.

Non-violence does not mean that one should meekly submit to the will of the evil doer. Of course, it means that one should love even the evil-doer. It is a confrontation between the will of the non-violent Satyagrahi and that of the tyrant. Non-violence is based upon the concept of spiritual unity with the opposite party which cannot be there if violence is met with violence. One should not use the language of the violent evil doer. Under non-violence evil is sought to be won over by good; immorality is opposed by morality and physical force is challenged by the soul-force and truth. Gandhi thought that, "One had better not speak it (truth) if one cannot do so in a gentle way... Truth without non-violence is not truth but

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153. M.K. Gandhi, Bapu's Letters To Mira, p.157., as quoted in G.N. Dhawan, Political Philosophy Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.73.

154. Harlian, March 3, 1946, p.28.

untruth." <sup>155</sup> It has great faith in the essential goodness of human nature. It is an effort to convert the bad to the good so that the evil doer also becomes conscious of this spiritual unity with the non-violent individual. The effort of the non-violent individual is to bring about a feeling of repentance in the evil-doer.

Gandhi said, "The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe." <sup>156</sup> Non-violence rules out all intentional acts of violence *eg.* hunting, non-vegetarian diet etc. Gandhi considered vegetarianism the most magnificent contribution of Hinduism. Though Gandhi believed in vegetarianism, yet he did not believe religion to be a matter simply of dietetics only. Non-violence also means that one should not follow those professions which involve violence *eg.* the profession of a butcher or a hunter. In a profession one should not exploit others too. If a man avoids violence willingly or knowingly, he is near the concept of perfect Ahimsa or non-violence or the Absolute Truth or God. Some people criticize Gandhi's concept of non-violence saying that it should not be followed when it is impossible to attain it. To this criticism Gandhi would say, "It is much better for me to say I have not sufficient non-violence in me than to admit exceptions to an eternal principle. Moreover, my refusal to admit exceptions spurs me to perfect myself in the technique of non-violence." <sup>157</sup>

155. Young India, II, p.1295.

156. Harijan, November 12, 1938, p.327.

157. Harijan, March 9, 1940, p.31.

Gandhi was never in favour of cowardice and weakness. He would never recommend that a weak person should choose non-violence out of necessity because this, "insistence on mere non-violence without concrete action is apt to be misleading...Non-violence and non-cooperation are the two wheels of the chariot. And taken together they require the greatest courage and sacrifice in their votaries."<sup>158</sup> Gandhi said, "I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour."<sup>159</sup> Gandhi considered the issue whether a coward following the path of non-violence is superior to a person following violence. To Gandhi there are three categories of non-violence. The highest category is enlightened non-violence which is followed by one due to firm convictions and also due to one's high moral stature under which the path of violence is completely irrelevant. This does not distinguish between political and non-political spheres. It embraces all the spheres and the follower of such a creed does not know any compromise on principles. He follows the path of conversion rather than coercion of the opponent. Under this category there is no scope of expediency.

In the next category, non-violence is followed due to some emergent situation and helplessness i.e. as an expediency. It is the non-violence of the weak. Under it there is no moral conviction about

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158. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.I, p.545. (Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

159. W.K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.155.

the efficacy or utility of non-violence but it is due to one's weakness that violence is rejected. Under this the results can be obtained to a certain extent if sufficient use of courage and not cowardice is made. In large groups it is very difficult to follow the non-violence of the first category because on a big scale it is difficult to raise the moral standard of so many people at the same time. Non-violence as a policy fails if it is followed in a cowardly manner. When there were communal riots in India and people were killing one another, Gandhi was much pained because non-violence was not being followed. People were using violence whenever they desired. In the eve of the partition of the country Gandhi had commented, "There was no such thing as non-violence of the weak. Non-violence and weakness was a contradiction in terms."<sup>160</sup>

The third category of non-violence is of the lowest variety. This is followed due to fear and cowardice. Fear and love do not go together and hence, "Cowardice and ahimsa do not go together any more than water and fire."<sup>161</sup> Again "violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent."<sup>162</sup> If one was to choose between violence and cowardice, Gandhi would prefer the former for, "...It is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence."<sup>163</sup> He further believed, "Non-violence cannot be taught to a person who

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160. Harlian, July 27, 1947, p.253.

161. Harlian, November 4, 1939, p.331.

162. Harlian, October 21, 1939, p.310

163. Harlian, October 21, 1939, p.310.

fears to die and has no power of resistance...Before he can understand non-violence he has to be taught to stand his ground and suffer death in the attempt to defend himself against the aggressor who bids fair to overwhelm him. To do otherwise would be to confirm his cowardice and take him further away from non-violence. Whilst I may not actually help any one to retaliate, I must not let a coward seek shelter behind non-violence so called."<sup>164</sup>

According to Gandhi self-realization is the final goal of man. It means seeing God face to face which can be done by following the path of non-violence and Truth. He differs from the Utilitarians who believe that there should be the greatest good of the greatest number. He believes in the greatest good of all which is known as 'Sarvodaya' in Sanskrit. Self-sacrifice is necessary for attaining these goals. He wrote in 1926, "He (the ahimsaist) will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal ...The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greater number, and Gandhi and the utilitarian will converge at many points in their career but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian to be logical will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist will even sacrifice himself."<sup>165</sup> It was against his creed of non-violence to take advantage of the opponent when he was busy in a war and thus he thought it his duty to give support to the British Empire when he supported the British war effort in World War I. Gandhi was very particular about the opponent's attitude also towards the follower

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164. Harizan, July 20, 1935, p.180.

165. Young India, II, p.956.

of Ahimsa. He wrote, "...the principal implication of ahimsa," is, "that the ahimsa in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart."<sup>166</sup>

Gandhi did not hate the person but he opposed the system which was full of injustice. He believed, "Our non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the west. It is with the system which the English have established, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak, our non-cooperation is a retirement within ourselves, a refusal to cooperate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them, 'Come and cooperate with us on our terms, and it will be well for us, for you and the world!'"<sup>167</sup> Further he said, "Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good."<sup>168</sup> The same is true of social boycott which should not be resorted to to injure the sentiments of others. To Gandhi the scope of Ahimsa is very comprehensive for "the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence."<sup>169</sup> Ofcourse, it includes the animal world also but "that can never mean that one is to be kind to this life (animals) in preference to human life."<sup>170</sup> Non-violence is found in different religions but Hinduism lays special emphasis upon it. "Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism...."<sup>171</sup>

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166. Harijan, May 13, 1939, p.121.

167. C.F. Andrews, Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas, p.264.  
(Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1930)

168. Pyarelal, A Pilgrimage For Peace, Appendix, p.203.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

169. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.6.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

170. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.63.

171. Young India, October 20, 1927, p.352.



Non-violence involves the factor of love of other human beings and love is directly related to God and Truth. Gandhi says, "My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than truth...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." <sup>172</sup> Again, "...a non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God...Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives even of those who may be called opponents...." <sup>173</sup> He believed, "God is life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness as conceived apart from Him is a life-less thing and exists only whilst it is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God." <sup>174</sup>

He further felt, "This (living faith in non-violence) is impossible without a living faith in God...Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation...." <sup>175</sup> Due to his firm belief in God Gandhi said, "In Ahimsa it is not the

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172. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, OR The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.370.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

173. Harlian, June 18, 1938, p.152.

174. Harlian, August 24, 1947, p.285.

175. Harlian, June 18, 1938, p.152.

votary who acts in his own strength. Strength comes from God." 176  
 The realization of God is possible only by an intense faith in Him  
 for, "God cannot be realized through intellect. Intellect can  
 only lead to a certain extent and no further. It is a matter of  
 faith and experience derived from that faith...Full faith does not  
 feel the want of experience." 177 In the path of Ahimsa Gandhi  
 believed in soul-force because he said, "I seek entirely to blunt  
 the edge of the tyrant's sword not by nulling up against it a  
 sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I  
 would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul  
 that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first  
 dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition  
 would not humiliate him but uplift him." 178

Satyagraha which depends upon non-violence, truth and soul-  
 force is a good enough ideal because "it demands a stronger self  
 control, a more enduring solidarity of purpose, a greater capacity  
 for passive suffering, a higher ethical development than most human  
 beings have thus far attained." 179 Gandhi always disapproved of the  
 physical force in Satyagraha. He said, "We have become atheists  
 for all practical purposes. And, therefore, we believe in the long  
 run we must rely upon physical force for our protection." 180 Gandhi

176. Harian, August 18, 1940, p.256.

177. Harian, August 4, 1946, p.249.

178. G.V. Dhawan, Political Philosophy Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.141.

179. C.M. Case, Non-violent Coercion, pp.406-7.  
 (New York, 1923)

180. Young India, I, p.720.

believed that a non-violent system could not come into existence in a society where there was a difference between the haves and the have-nots. He wrote, "A non-violent system of Government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists."<sup>181</sup> Regarding the spirit of contentment Gandhi said, "As it is the rich are discontent no less than the poor. The poor man would fain become a millionaire and the millionaire a multi-millionaire. The rich should take the initiative in dispossession with a view to universal diffusion of the spirit of contentment."<sup>182</sup>

If the rich do not take the initiative in this direction, a violent revolution is sure to take place. "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."<sup>183</sup> Gandhi felt that there is a unique pleasure in possessing less also for "the less you possess, the less you want, the better you are, better not for enjoyment of this life, but for enjoyment of personal service to one's fellow beings, service to which you dedicate yourself body, soul and mind."<sup>184</sup> About the possibility of the practice of non-violence, Gandhi says that it can be practised. He says, "those who die unresistingly are likely to still the fury of violence by their wholly innocent sacrifice. But this truly non-violent action is not possible unless it springs from

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181. M.K. Gandhi, Constructive Programme, p.21.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1943)

182. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.255.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

183. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.78.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1943)

184. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.III, p.157.

a heart belief that he whom you fear and regard as a robber, dacoit, or worse, and you are one, and that therefore, it is better that you die at his hands than that he, your ignorant brother, should die at yours." 135

Gandhi firmly believed that Ahimsa is impossible without Truth. While nursing the path of Truth there is no scope for cheating, deceit, prejudice, secrecy etc. Pursuit of Truth also involves tolerance and lack of hatred. Truth must be spoken despite the fact that sometimes harsh words have to be used but no harm should be intended for the opposite party while so doing. "Harsh truth may be uttered courteously and gently, but the words would read hard. To be truthful you must call a liar a liar - harsh words perhaps, but the use is inevitable." 136 Gandhi's own life was an experiment with truth, a search after truth. Whenever he had to do anything new in this field, he would try it first on himself. Gandhi thought that by virtue of the capacity to determine the truth for oneself, an individual can be distinguished from a brute. Gandhi had a great belief in the capacity of the masses to discover and pursue the path of truth.

A moral life is the basic fundamental for the search of truth. "As soon as we lose the moral basis we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel or incontinent, and claim to have God on his side." 137 He thought that for the realization of

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135. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.I, p.317.  
(Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

136. Harlian, February 6, 1937, p.415.

137. Young India, November 24, 1921, p.385.

Truth a regular practice, a sort of detachment from the materialistic pleasures, the vows of truth, non-violence, celibacy, non-possession, non-stealing etc. are very necessary. An individual who is not practising these, has not got a clear conscience and he will not be able to hear the clear voice of his conscience about truth. To realize Truth, Ahimsa or non-violence is absolutely necessary. Violence, on the other hand, proceeds further on the bases of anger, selfishness and lust and these certainly cannot take one to the goal. To Gandhi violence is untruth which should not exist because if it does there will be anarchy in society. Violence is untruth also because it involves causing suffering to the opponent which is against truth or ahimsa which involves suffering for oneself.

Violence takes the sinner also as the target apart from the sin, while Truth implies service to all and a desire to suffer for all which establishes a sort of unity between the two parties. Violence tells upon this unity and encourages mutual hatred, bitterness and ill-will. To Gandhi truth is not without but is within oneself. If violence is resorted to in doing away with difficulties, truth remains away at a distance. The practice of non-violence implies the spiritual unity of all. Gandhi believed, "The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe."<sup>188</sup> The core of all religions is Ahimsa and thus Truth and Ahimsa are the two faces of the same coin. Ahimsa and Truth, "are like two sides of a coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc."<sup>189</sup> Still truth

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188. Harizan, November 12, 1938, p.327.

189. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.251.

remains the end, to achieve which, Ahimsa is the means. Gandhi could never sacrifice the truth though he could part with non-violence sometimes. "The jewel of non-violence was discovered during the search for and contemplation of truth."<sup>190</sup>

To Gandhi truth was the highest law while non-violence was the highest duty. He believed, "Satyagraha is a new experiment in political field...."<sup>191</sup> He also believed that, "Ahimsa being the means, we are naturally more concerned with it in our everyday life. It is ahimsa, therefore, that our masses have to be educated in. Education in truth follows from it as a natural end."<sup>192</sup> To him soul force is the strongest of all and on the basis of it one can face and defy the whole world despite one being unarmed. Love is universal with a universal appeal and application. In the case of animals also if one approaches them with a feeling of love, they do not harm. Under Gandhian concept of ahimsa, its followers are expected to follow many rules. It has many basic prerequisites. The two most important rules to be observed by the followers of Gandhi at Sabarmati Ashram were Truth and Non-violence or (Satya and Ahimsa). They were thought to be necessary for the growth of the religious instinct also.

Inflicting of violence on others was away from truth and God in the ideas of Gandhiji. Untruth and violence are one because they go against the principle of oneness of life. The seeker after truth

190. J.B. Kripalani, The Gandhian Way, Foreword by M.C. Gandhi. (Vora & Co., Bombay, 1938)

191. M.K. Gandhi, Speeches And Writings, p.503. (G.A. Natesan, Madras, 1934)

192. Varian, June 23, 1946, p.199.

must respect non-violence. Gandhi was not the first man to emphasize Ahimsa because we come across 'Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah' in Mahabharat. It was propounded by Jainism also. But in one way Gandhi was original and this was when he gave truth and ahimsa a comprehensive meaning instead of a restricted one. Gandhi used to place the ideal of Prahlad before him and his disciples. Prahlad had to suffer innumerable tortures at the hands of his father but he never cringed, rather he tolerated them smilingly. This should also be the attitude of a satyagrahi, a believer in ahimsa. Non-violence first of all presupposes the inner purification of the individual pursuing it. First, there must be an effort on the part of the non-violent individual to get rid of his feelings of resentment and hatred and to do so one does not require a good physique. Even the physically weak persons can do it.

Then the non-violent individual should arouse the sense of justice in the opposite party. Non-violence in its essence means some inconvenience to the individual practising it but it involves great favour and convenience to the other party. In perfect non-violence there is no scope for violence, hatred, anger and ill-will for others. It has got an overtone of love and that too love for its own sake. "Where love is, there God is also."<sup>193</sup> Further he said, "I should not hesitate to say that God is love."<sup>194</sup> For this, coordination of mind, body and speech are required. But such an ahimsa is the quality of God alone or God among men. As long as

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193. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.360.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1928)

194. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.5.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

man is attached to the body, he is responsible for some sort of violence in the society. Gandhi has written, "Ahimsa is a comprehensive principle. We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of himsa. The saying that life lives on life has a deep meaning in it."<sup>195</sup>

When a man moves about in society, some sort of destruction of life is inevitable and this is inevitable himsa and cannot be helped. It happens when one drinks and eats but there are several other cases where violence becomes necessary eg. killing stray - dogs which make it difficult for the people to live in the society, killing plague-infected rats, killing snakes, tigers and mosquitoes and showing violence to a mad person. If violence is to be resorted to in such cases, it does not show the inadequacy of non-violence. With the passage of time certainly ways should be found to deal with these problems also in a non-violent manner. The person following the path of non-violence should resort to violence of the inevitable variety in the last resort only when all the remedies have failed and then it must not be used frequently. Non-violence is the quality of the strong but "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."<sup>196</sup> As a basic presupposition for non-violence fearlessness and bravery are very necessary. "Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice, but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far greater bravery than that of Swordsmanship. Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence."<sup>197</sup>

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195. M.K. Gandhi, Autobiography, II, p.229.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1929)

196. M.K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.155.

197. Young India, August 12, 1926, p.285.



Again, "Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge. This is no sermon on Ahimsa but cold reason and the statement of a universal law. Given the unquenchable faith in the law, no provocation should prove too great for the exercise of forbearance. This I have described as the non-violence of the brave."<sup>198</sup> Again he has written, "The perfect non-violence of the brave is the highest. It means non-violence in thought, word and deed. The believers accept it as a creed and they are convinced about it. This sort of non-violence is the real antidote of violence."<sup>199</sup> About cowardice Gandhi writes, "There was no sin like cowardice."<sup>200</sup> He wrote, "...there is no question of compromise with cowardice. Either we train and arm ourselves for destruction, be it in self defence, and in the process to train for suffering too; or we merely prepare ourselves for suffering for defending the country or delivering it from domination."<sup>201</sup>

If cowardice and violence were the only alternatives, Gandhi would choose the latter. He wrote, "The truth is that cowardice itself is violence of a subtle and, therefore, dangerous type, and far more difficult to eradicate than the habit of physical violence. A coward never risks his life. A man who would kill often risks it. A non-violent person's life is always at the disposal of him who would take it. For he knows that the soul within never dies. The

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198. Harlian, September 8, 1946, p.296.

199. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.I, p.303. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

200. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, II, p.159. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

201. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.I, p.109. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

encasing body is ever perishing. The more a man gives his life, the more he saves it. Thus non-violence requires more than the courage of the soldier of war. The Gita definition of a soldier is one who does not know what it is to run away from danger."<sup>202</sup> Thus the non-violent person must have the ability and not the will to inflict violence. This ability has nothing to do with physical strength. It requires inner courage. Thus, to Gandhi non-violence was an instrument of the brave and not of the coward. Non-violence requires courage of meeting death without being tempted to kill others. One who cannot follow it, must kill and get killed, if necessary.

Non-violence is natural while violence is unnatural. "The children of violence will commit suicide and perish unless they turn away from violence."<sup>203</sup> Non-violence is not taken note of normally because it is natural; violence is noted for it is unnatural. Thousands of disputes in society are being settled due to the force of love. When close relatives fall apart and quarrel and cease to love one another, it is noted. For perfect non-violence, Gandhi insisted upon a close connection between the means and ends. Gandhi wrote, "They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of means. This is the proposition that admits of no exception."<sup>204</sup> The

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202. Young India, December 18, 1924, p.411.

203. Pyarelal Nair, Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase (1956) Vol.I, p.411. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1956)

204. N.K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.37. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

means and ends both should be pure and moral. He could not sacrifice morality or non-violent means for achieving the goal as was shown by him after the Chauri Chaura incident in 1922 when he suspended the Non-Cooperation Movement due to violence.

Gandhi rejected the Communist Doctrine that ends justify the means for he said, "It is true we cannot rise till our political condition is reformed. But it is not true that we shall be able to progress if our political condition undergoes a change by any means and in any manner. If the means employed is impure, the change will not be in the direction of progress but very likely in the opposite direction. Only a change brought about in our political condition by pure means, that is by peaceful and legitimate means can lead us to real progress." He revolutionized politics by emphasizing the purity of means. He maintained an organic unity between the ends and means which cannot be separated under any condition, whatsoever. The conception of the means justifying the ends was perhaps the greatest contribution of Gandhi. Gandhi's faith in the means is due to the fact that the results are beyond the control of a human being. So he must keep an eye on the means employed. So, "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself." He firmly believed that violence led to greater violence which was amply manifested in the two World Wars.

Gandhi prescribes many means to realize the end. Gandhi says, "Men's ideas of morality in these days cannot be said to be sound or deep...as a matter of fact, no religion can exist without morality.

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205. M.K. Gandhi, Gokhale, My Political Guru, p.50.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1955)

206. Harjan, February 11, 1939, p.8.

Those men who follow morality for its own sake must really be regarded as religious. The men who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for the good of their country are indeed men of lofty morality ... True morality consists not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves, and in fearlessly following it. True progress is impossible without such a strenuous pursuit of Truth. In other words, progress and reform are always intimately bound up with morality." 207 He has laid down certain principles according to Hindu traditions which are good for the whole of humanity. Some of the principles, prescribed by him are: truth, non-violence, asteya (non-stealing), aparigraha (non-possession) and brahmacharya (celibacy). Then Gandhi believed that one should perform one's duty at any cost and this was very necessary for self-realization. One should strengthen one's determination for the observance of moral laws in life.

The foremost place in these views is occupied by Truth. Gandhi distinguished between two sets of truths—one taken as a vow by an individual or a group of individuals in a particular situation. Then there is another variety of Truth which is more comprehensive than this. It is Absolute Truth which cannot be destroyed by time or space. It is in the latter sense that Gandhi treats Truth and God as one. To him Truth is Satva which is a permanent thing and this is called God. All knowledge i.e. (chit) is included in perfect

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207. M.K. Gandhi, Ethical Religion, p.36.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1930)

Truth and when one has all knowledge there is perfect happiness (ananda). That is why God is known as 'Sat - Chit - Anand'. Gandhi was devoted to Truth which was God for him. When Gandhi thought of the application of his concept of non-violence practically in any society, he was against the state. "The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."<sup>208</sup>

He believed that the state is based upon violence due to its compulsive nature exhibited through a vast network of bureaucratic organization equipped with instruments of oppression and suppression. Gandhi believed that the state killed individuality and thus hindered progress. He believed that, "the individual is the architect of his own Government. The law of non-violence rules him and his Government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour."<sup>209</sup> To him the state stultifies and curbs the personality of the individual. Then Gandhi feels that in any society, based on non-violence, the state is not needed at all because it does not develop good social consciousness in the individual who, he thinks will behave without the coercive necessity of the state. Non-violence, of course, requires 'anarigraha' or non-possession as one of its basic prerequisites. The political authority of the state is required to regulate the social

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208. N.K. Bose, Studies In Gandhism, p.202.  
(Indian Associated Publishing Co., Calcutta, 1947)

209. Harlijan, July 28, 1942, p.238.

behaviour, which in this case is highly redundant.

Gandhi's non-violent society would be a perfect democracy where each unit of a village even was to be self sufficient, independent and free. The State, "would for the most part be based on non-violence."<sup>210</sup> People in the society will have a sort of a federation without police or military. Great emphasis in this society was laid on the rural life and decentralization. To Gandhi true freedom could be had in a non-violent society where there was no state. After writing about it, towards the end he made a sort of concession in this society by saying that it could have some sort of Government but this Government would act in a non-violent manner. Its jails would serve the purpose of reformatories.--Gandhi was a great individualist. To him the state is a means to realize the welfare of the individual which is the end. He believed that the nature of the state was violent and hence there was conflict between the state and individual. In Gandhian society which will be based upon non-violence, the chances of exploitation of the weak will be much less. Gandhi said, "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen."<sup>211</sup>

He believed that personal freedom was necessary for the fulfilment of social obligations. "True vidya (knowledge) is the art of self purification."<sup>212</sup> To Gandhi, duties were more important than rights because an over emphasis upon rights would lead to social

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210. Harlian, February 16, 1947, p.25.

211. Young India, II, p.601.

212. Harlian, February 1, 1941, p.18.

restraints. The most important right is the right to perform one's duties. If one performs his duties, he begins to deserve the rights. Gandhi's belief that the state is based upon violence cannot be supported wholly because without an organized state there will be a state of nature where no individual can develop his personality. Some political thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Green and Bosancuet maintain that the state is natural and necessary. Control of animal feelings is not possible outside the state. So Gandhi was not wholly correct when he said that the state was unnecessary. Gandhi, like Tolstoy believes that a new civilization is needed from where greed, hatred and lust for power are vanished for good. In his approach to non-violence Gandhi expects a bit too much from the society. This standard is difficult to be achieved by an ordinary individual in this mundane world.

Apart from writing against the state, Gandhi held that his non-violent society should be decentralized economically and politically. Centralization of functions and non-violence cannot go together. Centralization involves the use of force and restricting individual liberty. If there is decentralization, the individual can take part in the Government of his country. Then there would be checks on the use of machinery also which makes the life of an individual monotonous. This would lead to more economic and political power with the village communities. In such a system Gandhi would prefer indirect to the direct elections for the national parliament. He believed in the decentralization of political life like Laski, Huxley and Cole. He was ostensibly foreseeing the system of village Panchayats. In the field of economic decentralization he wanted to encourage cottage industries by the abolition of large scale industries. Centralized industrial system is responsible for a great deal of violence in society.

Colonialism, imperialism and international rivalry-all are results of the centralized system. He felt that to introduce the principles of Non-Violence and Truth in the economic sphere and to do away with exploitation decentralization of state functions is very necessary. Gandhi, as a matter of fact, rediscovered the spinning wheel when he propagated the use of Khadi or hand-woven and hand-spun cloth.

His demand for curbing human wants would lead society to stagnation. But the main question was whether it was possible to abolish the benefits of civilization. When faced with this question, Gandhi opined that there could be no competition between the large-scale industries and the cottage industries; the former were to serve the good interests of the latter. Gandhi attached great importance to basic values of human life when he spoke in favour of decentralization of industries in his non-violent society. Then he was for 'Varma Vyavastha' in his non-violent society. Gandhi said that the law of Varma, "established certain sphere of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. While recognizing limitations the law of Varma admitted of no distinctions of high and low...My conviction is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to."<sup>213</sup> By this is meant that generation after generation the same profession should be followed by the members of a particular family - origin so that social stability is there and competition and evils of private profit are done away with. He believed that all the different professions stand on equal footing. Then this

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<sup>213</sup>. W.K. Bose, Studies In Gandhism, p.205.



work of a hereditary nature should be considered a duty to society by everybody. It cannot be a means to earn private profit. As far as possible the wages in all the professions should be equal.

There is one criticism against it and that is that it is liable to curb talent because personality develops in an atmosphere of freedom which Gandhi denies in this case. Non-possession was another feature of his non-violent society and he said that one should not have what is unnecessary. Only those things should be kept by one which are necessary. One should reduce his wants. "Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect love there must be perfect non-possession."<sup>214</sup> Then Gandhi thought the rich to be the trustees of the property of the poor. Gandhi felt, "The rich man will be kept in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society...The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the cooperation of the poor in society."<sup>215</sup> The rich should be ready to part with their superfluous things. The rich should, of course, keep their property but within limits. Gandhi was not in favour of violent action against the rich in order to dispossess them of their riches. He criticized the proletarian revolution by saying that it would deprive the society of a special class which knew how to accumulate wealth. The principle of trusteeship was the formula invented by Gandhi to overcome inequality in society. To avoid exploitation of man, all property

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214. N.K. Bose, Studies In Gandhism, p.200.  
(Indian Associated Publishing Co., Ltd., Calcutta, 1947)

215. Harijan, August 25, 1940, as quoted in N.K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.79.  
(Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

should be held as a trust.

Gandhi derived the principle of Bread labour from Tolstoy and this forms another feature of his non-violent society. Intellectual labour is not included in bread labour because, "the need of the body must be supplied by the body... Mere mental, that is intellectual labour is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment."<sup>216</sup> Under this manual labour is a must for every able-bodied person in order to get satisfaction from material wants. Intellectuals are no exception to this rule. He believed that the physical or manual work improved the quality of the intellectual work also. Every one in the society should do some productive labour at least enough to meet one's demands. Among the qualifications for voters, manual labour should be an essential criterion. Property qualifications should not be there at all. Self-confidence and fearlessness which are the hall marks of high character will be developed by this. Further, "intellectual work...has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No man I claim ought to be free from that obligation. It would serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output."<sup>217</sup>

Thus Gandhi believed in a sort of spiritual democracy where the individual is most important and his welfare and progress are the supreme considerations. Side by side with it he was conscious also of the welfare of the community. Sense of unity in society can be created only by the right type of education. In the non-violent state

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216. Harijan, June 29, 1935, p.156.

217. Harijan, February 23, 1947, p.36.

envisaged by Gandhi, rights depend strictly upon the performance of one's duties. Gandhi suggested a few techniques or essential devices to attain and perfect the implementation of non-violence. There are certain prerequisites which are essential for the practice of non-violence. Violence is the law of the jungle and manifestation of the brute force and gives rise to all which is away from truth while non-violence releases an atmosphere of love. Gandhi's approach to the maladjustments of society is spiritual. Under it the individual following and the other party, opposed to injustice, are to be identified as one. The individual so doing inflicts suffering on himself and he also tries to convert the opponent. There is no scope for mutual ill-will and hatred. The opponent has to be conquered by love and non-violence.

Gandhi believed that non-violence could be practised by any one if its basic prerequisites—path of truth and self-suffering were grasped and implemented. Gandhi thought that humility was also necessary for the Satyagrahi for "the existence of the body is possible only by reason of the ego. The complete annihilation of the body is salvation (or self-realization). He who has completely destroyed the ego becomes an Embodiment of Truth."<sup>218</sup> The non-violent struggle was resorted to by Gandhi in South Africa and then it was used against the British in India. It may have been one of the factors, responsible for Indian independence but it is debatable whether it alone could have uprooted the mighty British imperialism. The degenerate and decrepit British economic condition after the

218. Harian, November 27, 1949, p.340.

second World War was one of the most important factors for their relinquishing the claims over India. The path of non-violence can be followed by adopting any one of the different techniques recommended by Gandhi.

Firstly, he believed that one should not cooperate with what is evil and wrong. "If a father does injustice, it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof...even so, if a Government does grave injustice, the subjects must withdraw cooperation wholly or partially sufficiently to wean the ruler from his wickedness." 219 He felt that all injustice, oppression and suppression followed from the cooperation of the individual with the oppressor. The moment an individual refuses to cooperate with him, his faculties to terrorize are gone. The same is true in the case of dictatorial systems of administration. If the people refuse to cooperate with what is wrong, the administration will crumble. Hence non-cooperation in a non-violent and peaceful manner is recommended. It has to start, of course, from self purification. First the individual has to rid himself of all that is evil and has to equip himself with basic courage. Then it becomes impossible for the opposite party to perpetuate its acts of suppression. Gandhi said about Salt Satyagraha, "I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons...A Satyagrahi whether free or incarcerated is ever victorious." 220

Non cooperation can also be done in several ways by boycott, by resorting to Hartal and picketing etc. Boycotting of certain

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219. Young India, I, pp.233-34.

220. M.K. Gandhi, Speeches And Writings, Of p.205.  
(G.A. Natesan, Madras, 1934)

persons who do not participate in non-cooperation, should not mean that abuses should be flung at them or their life should be made difficult. It only means that such persons should not be encouraged. By doing so it will have a psychological effect on their thinking. Thus they will begin to hate their own actions. It should be non-violent for which, "it must cause pain to the party using it, if it causes inconvenience to its object."<sup>221</sup> Hartal or bringing to a dead stop all business is another expression of non-cooperation. "Hartal forcibly brought about cannot be considered Satyagrahi hartal. In any thing Satyagrahi there should be purity of motive, means and end."<sup>222</sup> Hartal will divert the attention of the Government, the organisation or the institution involved in the evil practice or other sort of injustice which is being opposed. There is no scope for any violence here also. Gandhi recommended a precaution about Hartal and that was that it should be rarely resorted to. Its frequent repetition will cause hatred against it and render it ineffective. No force should be used to compel any one to participate in it. Everybody should be left free to decide for himself.

Picketing is another form of non-cooperation but no force is to be used in it also. It is a peaceful demonstration of one's opposition to injustice in front of a place where evil or injustice is taking place. No violence is to be used, no discourtesy, no unmannerliness to be shown, and no effigies to be burnt under this. Gandhi in this context was against hunger strikes and modern 'Dharnas' which have a tendency to assume the form of a violent coercion rather

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221. Young India, I, p.300.

222. Young India, January 12, 1920, as quoted in  
 Jai Prakash Chander, Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.236.

than a peaceful demonstration of one's opposition to whatever is evil and unjust. Another form of non-cooperation, recommended by Gandhi was Civil Disobedience but according to him it was to be the last and drastic remedy against the evils and injustice. In 1930 Gandhi wrote, "A little reflection will show that Civil Disobedience is a necessary part of non-cooperation. You assist an administration most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil administration never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good man will therefore resist an evil system of administration with his whole soul. Disobedience of the laws of an evil state is therefore a duty."<sup>223</sup> He laid emphasis upon two things in it civil and disobedience. But he laid more emphasis upon the word civil than on the word disobedience. It was to be a courteous, civilized, well-mannered disobedience of all the laws which were evil i.e. against the welfare of the people. It was an act of disobedience of select statutes of law, which, suppressed the liberty of the subject, but its process, though drastic, was to be slow and gradual. First of all, only a few laws which are very severe in its nature should be selected for opposition and then other ones. Opposition in the form of disobedience should come from a leader or a select group of leaders who should educate the people in this philosophy. Gandhi called Civil Disobedience "a complete effective and bloodless substitute"<sup>224</sup> for armed revolt.

223. Young India, March 27, 1930, p.108.

224. Young India, I, p.938.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1922)

Another form of non-cooperation was recommended by Gandhi and this is known as Hijrat. Those who could not live in a particular place with self respect should leave it. It is a course of action, to be followed and resorted to by persons, not well-up in the practice of non-violence i.e. those who fall short of implementing it. In the Bardoli struggle of 1928 Gandhi recommended this device to the non-violent workers and also to the satyagrahis at Junagarh in 1939. When the Hindus were trying to suppress the Harijans of Kaitha, Gandhi advised them to leave their place and go elsewhere. Gandhi mentioned it in the Harijan of October 5, 1935.

Then still another technique recommended by him was fasting whose basic purpose is self purification and to affect the moral sense of the opponent. In 1934 about fasting Gandhi said, "My repeated experience here and in South Africa has been that when well applied it has been the most infallible remedy...."<sup>225</sup> By the device of self-suffering, one tries to bring about the moral conversion of the opponent in favour of that which is right and just. All the same it is dangerous to go on fast if one does not know its technique because there is every danger of its being misused for wrong ends. If that is done it loses its utility. Gandhi says, "there is nothing so powerful as fasting and prayer that would give us the requisite discipline, spirit of self-sacrifice, humility and resoluteness of will without which there can be no real progress."<sup>226</sup>

Gandhi recommended the method of strike for the labourers

225. Chandrasankar Shukla, Conversations of Gandhiji, p.127.  
(Vora & Co., Bombay, 1949)

226. Young India, March 31, 1920, p.3.

against the injustice and exploitation of the capitalist class. This should also be directed on just and reasonable lines and be non-violent in its approach. Gandhi, in this sphere, is against the approach of most of the leftist parties where strike is resorted to by the labour to uproot and then replace the capitalist class. Gandhi did not consider the labour and the capitalists as two groups, standing in mutual confrontation. To him they are two tools of the same industrial machinery in which their relation should be of mutual cooperation. Of course, in this relationship the capitalist class or the moneyed class has to act as the trustee of the labour class and deliver them the goods they deserve by virtue of their labour. Both of them have to keep mutual faith but when this faith is broken by the capitalist class, the labour has to resort to strike but that has to be peaceful and non-violent.

A note of idealism is sounded again by Gandhi when he suggests his technique of non-violence at a time when a nation is attacked by another. In such an eventuality he suggests that there should be non-violent resistance to the opponent by the attacked nation until the last man remains. "Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process."<sup>227</sup> He further says that if the invader is able to occupy the territory of a nation, the people of that nation should give up possession of their land but refuse to cooperate with the invader. Gandhi believes that, "...the weakest state can render itself immune from attack if it learns the art of non-violence."<sup>228</sup> This Gandhian technique has not been tried much in

227. Harlian, November 4, 1939, p.331.

228. Harlian, October 7, 1939, p.292.



international field but there is every doubt of its success if it is used. To resist invasion in a non-violent manner before the might of the heavily armed militia of the present day and suffer bombardment from a place in the atmosphere where the attacking sorties of the airmen do not know the travails of the dying people, appears to be a theoretical thinking only.

Of course, the weapon of Satyagraha brings down the morale of the opposing party as was experienced in South Africa for "Ahimsa is the most efficacious in front of the greatest himsa."<sup>229</sup> Again, "Non-violence is a composite term and a comprehensive philosophy. It is not a single act of beneficence or benevolence. It sums up within itself all the virtues that spring from love of which it is the equivalent. 'Love is long suffering', said Christ and long-suffering implies forbearance, patience and forgiveness. It implies that one should not bear ill-will towards another, for ill-will is the root of all anger and vengeance and vendetta."<sup>230</sup> The satyagrahi puts the opponent in a strange position. If the opponent uses brute force against the satyagrahi, the mass of the public opinion would not support him and thus many people would be against him. If the opponent does not take stiff action, the struggle succeeds.

Gandhi felt that God would always help the satyagrahi. Gandhi said, "The root of Satyagraha is in prayer. A satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against the tyranny of brute force."<sup>231</sup> The

229. Harlan, May 27, 1939, p.138.

230. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi And Gandhism, Vol.I, p.65. (Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1943)

231. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.62. (Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

way of non-violent struggle has got an ennobling effect on both the satyagrahi and the other party. It is doubtful whether a non-violent society envisaged by Gandhi could actually come into existence because it appears to be Platonic. To Gandhi an ideal which could be easily attained was not an ideal. An ideal can not be achieved; only efforts can be made, he thought. It requires continuous efforts. In the Gandhian state and society, truth, non-violence and love are the guiding principles. Gandhi was an idealist but did not fly in the face of realities, eg. he did not approve of centralization but at the same time he made a concession to the society to have railways and steamships until it reached a stage where they could be dispensed with. He was for the state control of large industry but would not mind, in the least, the association of the rich persons with big projects provided they took the workers as their cosharers in this scheme.

Gandhi believed in socialism, equal opportunities to all and equitable distribution. He became a socialist due to his faith in God and he would not like anybody to suppress the rights of others. He was a believer in the common ownership of the land. Economic equality was fundamental to his socialism. He set his energies against poverty and under-employment also. Gandhi was a revolutionary of a non-violent variety. He was always against the methods of force and violence of the Marxian type. Bhoodan movement has been the greatest example of the implementation of the non-violent methods. Gandhi thought that the ideal condition of Ahimsa could not be realized in this world because it was a quality of God alone to behave like that. The results of violence are highly temporary, those of love and non-violence permanent. Violence and hatred increase violence. Gandhi believed, "Non-violence has no limits. If a particular dose

does not seem to answer, more should be administered. It is a never failing remedy." 232 He further said, "I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. I do not believe that the killing of even every Englishman can do the slightest good to India. The millions will be just as badly off as they are today, if some one made it possible to kill off every Englishman tomorrow." 233 Gandhi considered non-violence to be "the law of our species," 234 which can be followed even by children, groups of individuals and even the masses.

No doubt non-violence has been there from time immemorial but in the past it was considered to be the privilege of only the virtuous few but Gandhi tried to make its use universal. Gandhi is unique in having experimented this practically in every sphere of life. He showed humanity that it was the strongest and the most refined weapon, capable of being used by every body. It takes one away from hatred for, "conflicting moral standards produce social, economic and political contradictions and maladjustments and cause violence, revolution and war." 235 Gandhi's idea was to introduce the element of morality in the individual, national and international sphere. Cheating, lying and deceit cannot be justified in any manner and in any sphere - political, economic or social. Gandhi wrote, "Ahimsa has nothing to do with power. Mine is a great experiment...I am a seeker, and I have

232. Harlian, August 20, 1938, p.226.

233. Young India, II, p.928.

234. Harlian, November 4, 1939, p.331.

235. Mumayun Kabir, ed., Gandhian Outlook And Techniques, Appendix B, p.353.  
(Ministry Of Education, Government Of India, 1953)

to patiently work out the science of Satyagraha." 236

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236. Harian, March 2, 1940, p.22.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROLE OF NON-VIOLENCE IN AN INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE

The principles of non-violence are designed primarily to prepare the individual to accept Satyagraha as a way of life. Satyagraha as distinguished from passive resistance was used by Gandhi as a weapon also of group action against the Government of South Africa. Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, fasting and other forms of non-violent direct action form a part of Satyagraha but they do not fully signify its meaning. Satyagraha really means sticking to the path of truth. The highest truth to Gandhi was spiritual unity which could be attained only by suffering for one and all. Satyagraha is based upon Truth which, "...involves tapas-self-suffering, sometimes even unto death." 237

If non-cooperation is violent, it will further increase the wrong and evil. So invariably non-cooperation should be non-violent. Disobedience is included in non-cooperation but disobeying the laws in a civil manner should be the normal practice. The baffling problems of daily life have their solution in non-violent non-cooperation. If some one's relatives are unjust, this method can be effectively used against them also. Gandhi wrote, "If my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him. On the contrary, my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents." 238

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237. Jag Parvesh Chander, Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, p.553.  
(The Indian Printing Works, Lahore, 1947).

238. Young India, I, p.247.

If even some force is used against a highly violent and armed group, this force amounts to non-violence. Then Gandhi says that if force is to be used, it should be just sufficient and not more than what is required. By putting such conditions and prerequisites Gandhi is really making his concept of non-violence idealistic and certainly difficult to be implemented by an ordinary person. Satyagraha can take a different form (Duragrah) in a couple of ways. In a few cases, suffering has a tendency to become coercive and violent and is undergone simply for the sake of show. In a few other cases, even before the opponent's reason is appealed to, he has to yield because the suffering is undertaken in a manner which becomes intolerable to the opponent. Thus the opponent is not converted which is a fundamental point in non-cooperation. "Its abuse is the greatest in domestic relations because those against whom it is used are not strong enough to resist the abuse. It becomes a case of misapplied affection. Noting parents or wives are the greatest victims. These will learn wisdom when they realize that affection does not demand yielding to extortion in any form. On the contrary true affection will resist it."<sup>239</sup> Before it is possible to establish world peace, the practice of Satyagraha and non-violence is essential in personal life.

Gandhi later on drew a distinction between Satyagraha and passive resistance. Of course, both try to meet the challenge of the aggressor, aim at doing away with the conflicts and at bringing about social and political change but passive resistance is dependent upon political expediency while the backbone of Satyagraha is morality under which the power of physical force is insignificant. Passive resistance

<sup>239</sup>. Harijan, May 18, 1940, p.133.

can be used by the weak while Satyagraha by the brave and fearless. Satyagraha never aims at embarrassing the opponent while the aim of passive resistance is to do so. In Satyagraha one never hates his opponent while in passive resistance there is no scope for love for the opponent. Hence, "while in passive resistance there is scope for the use of arms when a suitable occasion arrives, in satyagraha physical force is forbidden even in the most favourable circumstances." One thing is certain that under passive resistance violence can be used if circumstances demand it while in Satyagraha there is no scope for it. Passive resistance weakens a person morally while Satyagraha uplifts him in this sphere. Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru on October 5, 1945, "I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity...man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self sufficient. If he does not have this control he cannot save himself." 241

Gandhi's non-violence which is based upon truth-force and soul-force has got great importance in individual life. "Much of the non-violence practised by ardent devotees who, for the sake of convenience or for avoiding bloodshed, seek to practise what Gandhiji taught, are only variations of violence. Non-violence does not consist in merely not calling to aid a lathi or a dagger or a pistol. The positive aspect of non-violence is what has to be realised; and that is firm faith in the reality of God's sovereignty." 242 An individual

240. Nirmal Kumar Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.185.

241. Shriman Narayan, ed., The Selected Works Of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.V, pp.118-19. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1968)

242. Amar Nath, Recollections Of And About Mahatma Gandhi, p.30. (Star Publications, Delhi, 1969)

normally is faced with many problems in his life. He sometimes suffers from inferiority complex while at others from superiority complex; his life is characterized by hatred, jealousy, greed and innumerable other psychological features. He wishes to progress but he cannot proceed further. At every step he finds opposition, mutual ill-will and obstacles. Any one of these hurdles is sufficient to bring the debacle of an aspiring man or downfall of an otherwise noble soul. When one follows the path of non-violence, these disappear. Gandhi was a firm believer in non-violence. He wrote, "The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness. Honesty, they say in English, is the best policy. But in terms of non-violence, it is not mere policy. Policies may and do change. Non-violence is an unchangeable creed. It has to be pursued in face of violence raging around you. Non-violence with a non-violent man is no merit. In fact it becomes difficult to say whether it is non-violence at all. But when it is pitted against violence, then one realizes the difference between the two. This we cannot do unless we are ever wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving." 243

Further Gandhi believed that to some non-violence was a matter of policy and expediency while to others a creed. Gandhi further believed that, "in spite of the greatest effort to be detached, no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or upbringing. Non-violence of two persons occupying different positions will not outwardly take the same shape. Thus the non-violence of a child towards his father would take the shape of conscious and voluntary submission



to his violence when he loses temper. But if the child has lost his temper, the father's submission to the child's violence would be meaningless. The father would take the child to his bosom and instantaneously sterilize the child's violence... One who having retaliation in his breast submits to violence out of policy is not truly non-violent and may even be a hypocrite if he hides the intention. It should also be remembered that non-violence comes into play only when it comes into contact with violence. One who refrains from violence when there is no occasion for its exercise is simply unviolent and has no credit for his inaction." 244

Many incidents of mutual quarrel and murder would no more spoil the atmosphere of the society if the spirit of true love is there. If the feelings change for the better and there is a friendly atmosphere much evil in society could be got rid of. It is quite relevant to judge the role of non-violence in the individual life first of all with reference to Gandhi's life. Gandhi believed that Satyagrah as a weapon has been known to civilization from very ancient times. Gandhi wrote, "I see now as clearly as daylight that my non-violence working as it has done against the British misrule has shaken it somewhat. Even so will it shake the counter-violence of the patriot if taking courage in both my hands, I set my non-violence actively in motion i.e. Civil Disobedience... I have been a 'gambler all my life'. In my passion for finding the truth and in relentlessly following out my faith in non-violence, I have counted no stake too great...." 245

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244. Young India, January 30, 1930, p.37.

245. Young India, February 20, 1930, p.61.

Non-violence is sometimes used in the daily business by a man in his relationship with his wife, his father, children or the people in the neighbourhood. Instead of following the philosophy of 'tit for tat', when an individual suffers peacefully without retaliating in an active manner, this behaviour brings about the real change in the situation. Gandhi further said, "working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or regeneration."<sup>246</sup> In such a case physical violence is not resorted to. This sort of non-violence is most common in the family atmosphere. It can be seen from the life of Gandhi himself that due to non-violence, dignity and honour came to be associated with him. We find from his High School days how his policy of sticking to truth won him personal prestige.

Gandhi used Satyagraha in the individual, group and national life. Gandhi wrote, "The paralysing fear that had possessed the nation before the advent of Satyagraha has gone once for all...non-violence is a matter of patient training. If we are to be saved and are to make a substantial contribution to the world's progress, ours must emphatically and predominantly be the way of peace."<sup>247</sup> Gandhi was always ready to cooperate with the good and non-cooperate with the evil. Gandhi based his life on truth, love and fearlessness. "Truth and love - Ahimsa - is the only thing that counts. Where this

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246. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace And War, Vol.I, p.3.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

247. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War,  
Vol.I, p.110.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

is present, everything rights itself in the end. This is a law to which there is no exception." 248 His life was an experiment with truth and had it not been so, it would have been impossible for him to use his technique at the group or national level. Gandhi laid great emphasis upon Brahmcharya also. "A man or woman completely practising brahmcharya is absolutely free from passion...I have no doubt that it is possible to practise such brahmcharya in thought, word and action to the fullest extent." 249

He desired non-violence to be effective and to be followed in thought and action. It should have an impression upon all the actions of life. According to him, "The alphabet of Ahimsa is best learnt in the domestic school....For a non-violent person the whole world is one family." 250 In the life of a satyagrahi there is no scope for violence. If the satyagrahi does not believe in and follow non-violence in his private life and follows it only in public affairs, it is the non-violence of the weak. He said, "Ahimsa must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise it will be only an empty hulk, a thing without potency or power." 251 In the beginning Gandhi did not insist that non-violence should be followed as a creed by the satyagrahi. Thus he made some concession to human weakness which is a hurdle in the path of non-violence. Later on he began to believe that without firm faith in non-violence, a satyagrahi could not achieve his aims.

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248. Young India, August 18, 1927, p.265.

249. Young India, June 5, 1924, p.186.

250. Harlian, July 21, 1940, p.214.

251. Harlian, June 24, 1939, p.174.

If one resorts to violence it sets in motion a chain reaction giving rise to further violence which will develop an atmosphere of mutual hatred and animosity. On the other hand non-violence engenders the atmosphere of good will, friendship and morality.

It is believed by people that in the business and professional career principles of truth, non-violence and honesty do not bring about fine results. Gandhi in his legal career stuck to truth and did not distort or twist the facts. Even then he got much success. He would always take only those cases which guaranteed truth and justice. He never bothered about income by false means. Once in Johannesburg he found that his client had hidden facts from him and that he was pleading on the basis of wrong facts. He requested the magistrate to dismiss the case. The judge was highly appreciative of Gandhi's conduct. The client also felt sorry before him and thenceforth Gandhi had a reputation as a lawyer with integrity due to which his clients would win the case. Similarly after some time Gandhi refused to take the side of one of his clients who was involved in smuggling goods into the country without paying any duty. Gandhi made this client confess his guilt before the customs officer and then a compromise was arrived at. Truth was not sacrificed. He believed that a satyagrahi should have faith in God for, "it is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains, and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing, but a living, wide awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches." 252

Gandhi was always in the good books of his teachers in his schooldays. It so happened once that the education Inspector of the District, Mr. Giles came to the High School on his regular tour of inspection. At this time Gandhi was a student. The inspector wanted to find out whether the teacher was doing his job in a right manner. So he gave a spelling exercise to the students of Gandhi's class. He gave them to spell out five words and one of these words was 'kettle'. Gandhi did not remember the correct spelling of this word. The teacher was worried and while walking up and down he gave a hint to Gandhi to copy it down from his neighbour's slate. Gandhi had written 'kettel' and thus naturally the standard of all correct spellings of the whole class was spoiled by Gandhi. The teacher called Gandhi in the evening. Gandhi had thought that he would be rebuked by his teacher but to his surprise he was informed that he had risen in his estimate and from that time Gandhi was treated with utmost respect by his teacher.

There are many occasions in an individual's life when he is faced with a typical problem of helplessness and is forced to resort to theft, cheating or telling a lie to safeguard his prestige in a particular situation. It is alright but confession and suffering after the deed, are rare. If suffering is inflicted on oneself and is accompanied with confession, one is not lowered in the eyes of the other party but rises in his estimation instead. Such an incident happened when Gandhi was fifteen years old. Gandhi's elder brother had incurred a debt of twenty five rupees and he was afraid of the creditor. Both the brothers sat together and decided to take some little piece of gold from the amulet of his brother. This amulet had been given to his brother by his father as a gift. With the help of this the debt was cleared but Gandhi did not get mental peace because the thought of misusing his father's property bothered him much. He

began to consider himself a cheat. He could not get any relief out of this situation unless he had confessed to his father.

He made up his mind firmly not to steal in future but that would not suffice for his mental satisfaction. He made up his mind to confess to his father. He did not want to give a shock to his father by talking the matter over with him. So he decided to write a letter to him about it and to demand a punishment for his deed. Gandhi handed over the letter to his ailing father without speaking even a single word regarding it. His father burst into weeping. Gandhi also wept. His father forgave him and began to pat him on the back. Gandhi's wife used non-violence towards him. Gandhi remarks about his wife, "I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking I was born to rule over her; and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of Satyagraha which she unwittingly practised in her own person." 253

Sometimes in the life of an individual a situation arises when he finds himself being opposed by a group of persons. In such cases if violence is resorted to, this single individual is sure to meet his doom. So violence in such a situation also is out of the question. It is a fact that "the path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence." 254 Non-violence helps the individual in such

253. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi, p.108.  
(Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1957)

254. Harlian, August 4, 1946, pp.248-49.

a situation too. Gandhi was faced with such a situation when the persons of his caste, the Modh Banias tried to oust him from their caste on his return from London after his studies in law at the Inner Temple. It was considered to be a great sin to go abroad and cross the oceans. People thought that contact with Englishmen made one untouchable. Gandhi had sailed for England against the wish of the people of his caste. So on his return the majority of the people of his caste excommunicated him. Gandhi did not oppose this decision by showing any ill-will or violence. He patiently accepted the decision and began to follow all the necessary regulations. The result of this attitude was wonderful and there was no more opposition to him from the members of his caste. They became generous and affectionate towards him. It was a miracle that at the time of satyagraha the response from his caste was favourable.

Another famous incident which shows the role of non-violence in the individual life is from the life of Gandhi in South Africa. He wrote, "It was only when I had learnt to reduce myself to zero that I was able to evolve the power of Satyagraha in South Africa."<sup>255</sup> Once in South Africa Gandhi was to go from Charlestown to Johannesburg in a stage-coach which was normally not customary for an Indian who was looked down upon by the white population. He was not given a proper seat inside the coach but was made to travel by the side of the driver and a bit later on the footboard which Gandhi refused. Then the conductor began to box Gandhi's ears and harass him by pulling him along by his arm. Gandhi did not retaliate but at this the

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255. Harlian, May 6, 1939, p.113.

passengers asked the conductor to leave Gandhi alone. The conductor was opposed by the passengers and then the conductor and not Gandhi travelled on the footboard. Gandhi did not take revenge from the man. Some white passengers apologized to Gandhi. Gandhi wrote later, "Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration." 256

In South Africa another incident took place when Gandhi forgave the person who beat him thoroughly. It was a rule in Pretoria that the negroes should not pass by the side of the house of President Kruger. Gandhi did not know that he also could not walk in the President's road. When once during one of his long evening walks he walked in this road he was beaten by a President's guard. A white lawyer, Mr. Coates was passing by that side. He assured Gandhi of his witness in the court of law against the guard. Gandhi said there was no need for it and that he had already forgiven the guard when he approached him with an apology. Sometimes when a larger crowd turns violent to an individual, non-violence helps him and brings relief to the thousands of persons who are suffering in similar situations. Gandhi believed that the greater the suffering inflicted on oneself by the follower of non-violence, the greater would be the service to the whole community. If by chance the person involved in the affair



is important, the cause of the sufferers is served in a better manner. If a person is not well known, there would be no excitement but if there is an important person the reaction and the results are important indeed. The most important persons at the top of the social ladder, therefore, should be inclined to suffer and sacrifice in a non-violent manner.

Gandhi came to India for a short while from South Africa in 1896 and contacted leaders and officials to enlist their support for the suffering Indians in South Africa. He delivered speeches to enlighten public opinion in favour of the Indian problem in South Africa. Due to this the white population of South Africa was much enraged with the activities of Gandhi. So when he went back to Natal some Europeans, on seeing him walk from the port, attacked him with bricks and rotten eggs. Gandhi did not retaliate and was saved by the wife of a white Police Superintendent. In the late evening a torch light procession came to the place where Gandhi was lying wounded. The processionists wanted to burn down the house but somehow Gandhi was sent out in disguise. The then secretary of state for colonies, Mr. Chamberlaine, asked the Government of Natal to bring the persons, who attacked Gandhi, to book.

When Gandhi was asked to tell the faces, involved, from his memory, he replied, "I do not wish to prosecute anyone. It is possible that I may be able to identify one or two of them, but what is the use of getting them punished? Besides I do not hold the assailants to blame. They were given to understand that I had made exaggerated statements in India about the whites in Natal, and calumniated them. If they believed these reports, it is no wonder that

they were enraged. The leaders, and, if you will permit me to say so, you are to blame. You could have guided the people properly, but you also believed Reuter and assumed that I must have indulged in exaggeration. I do not want to bring anyone to book. I am sure that when truth becomes known, they will be sorry for their conduct." 257

This raised the status of Indians in South Africa and it could not have been done by hundreds of speeches. His forgiveness paid when people came to him to tender apology.

An individual can be successful also against the people and the Government by following the path of non-violence. Gandhi began a fast unto death on the 20th September 1932 for the sake of the untouchables. The fact is that many Hindus were also for the abolition of untouchability but their process appeared to be very slow to many other enthusiasts like B.R. Ambedkar who wanted that higher education should be given to the untouchables and their standard of living should also be raised. Finally he wanted untouchability to be abolished. This problem was raised in the Second Round Table Conference. There Dr. Ambedkar was for special seats for the untouchables in the legislatures. He wanted also separate electorates for them. Gandhi saw in this move the disruption of national unity. He was ready to resist it even by putting his life at stake. The British Government had come forward with the Communal Award in which this scheme had been given a sanction.

According to Gandhi, this unjust situation for some people was the creation of the Hindus, who, he thought, in their turn, should solve this problem. He never wanted this permanent status of

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257. M.K. Gandhi, Autobiography Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, Vol. I, p.453. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1927)

untouchables for a few persons. Gandhi resorted to fast unto death which could be stopped only if the Communal Award was withdrawn. He thought that the concealed divinity of human nature could be known by penances. He believed, "According to scriptures, that was dharma which was enjoined by the holy books, followed by the sages, interpreted by the learned and which appealed to the heart." <sup>258</sup> Due to this fast even Orthodox Hindus started talking against untouchability and temples began to be thrown open to the untouchables. There was a meeting between the leaders of the Hindus and the untouchables and a pact, according to the wishes of Gandhi, was signed and the British Prime Minister was informed accordingly. In no time the problem was solved and untouchability did not remain so significant any more.

In his Harijan tour in 1934 there are evidences of Gandhi's non-violent approach. He was out to collect funds for the welfare of the Harijans but was criticised by Sanatanists who held black flag demonstrations also. They tried to disturb his meetings. They wanted to oppose Gandhi for his having introduced non-violence. Gandhi could have been put in an embarrassing situation had his followers also behaved similarly or had they called the police to deter the disturbing element. His non-violence then would have received a serious blot. Afterwards Gandhi began to tour the villages in Orissa on foot so that he was in the midst of his opponents. They could thus be changed in their attitude and opposition could be much less.

After the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in October 1934, Gandhi, in a way, retired from the Congress and devoted his time to the uplift of the villages. One of the key villages chosen for this work was Jewagram near Wardha. It had a population of 600

persons and there was no pucca road, post office or a shop there. Gandhi began to live in a one-room hut there. Water-logging was there during the rains and the people frequently suffered from malaria and dysentery. Gandhi also was taken ill but he was determined not to leave this place. He would not allow even his wife and other disciples to come near him because he wanted to organize a band of workers from that village itself. Even then his disciples came and joined him eg. Prof. Bhansali, Maurice Frydman and others. Maurice Frydman was a resident of Poland and had come under the influence of Gandhi's philosophy of civilization, based upon handicrafts and deriving its inspiration from non-violence. Gandhi was concerned with the training of the individuals in the art of non-violence. Gandhi said that for this, "there is no royal road", except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all impurities...." 259

Gandhi was much associated with Rajkot. After the general elections of July, 1937 responsible Governments were established in various Provinces and the people in the princely states were also clamouring for them in 1938-39. The Thakore of Rajkot had entered into an agreement with Vallabhbhai Patel that people would be granted certain rights and liberties - political prisoners were to be released and a few political reforms were to be introduced. The Thakore did not honour this agreement. Gandhi was worried because he felt that if the rulers of states would not abide by the agreements with the people, the whole case for the independence of India would be spoilt. Gandhi himself went to Rajkot to bring to bear upon the ruler's mind that he

should honour the agreement. The ruler did not agree after which Gandhi resorted to his technique of fast. This small issue of a princely state assumed a national stature. The Viceroy intervened and appointed Sir Maurice Gwyer to interpret the terms of the agreement.

Gwyer's verdict was in favour of the people. The right of Patel to decide the nomination of the majority of the members of the Reforms Committee was also recognized but then later on there was some trouble and there was ill-will between the ruler and his minister. Gandhi realized that his policy of non-violence had failed because of the intervention of the Viceroy and also because he could not stick to his policy of converting his opponent in this case. He was not in favour of having the advantages given by Gwyer; he apologized to both the Viceroy and the Chief Justice and requested the ruler to give the best treatment to the people of Rajkot. A wave of protest was there against this action of Gandhi but to him non-violence was most important. He was for only the limited number of demands which the Princes could easily grant and consider also. He wanted to set an example before his followers of Satyagraha to stick to the basic principles of non-violence despite the risk of life.

Gandhi said, "I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."<sup>260</sup> After the beginning of the Second World War, the British Government, without consulting the

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260. Harjan, January 23, 1939, p.443.

representative Indian Ministers in the Provinces, had declared that India was with Britain in that war. After this Gandhi was called by the Viceroy Linlithgow to see him. Gandhi saw the Viceroy at Simla and told him that he could give his moral support to the Allied Powers as he believed in non-violence. Gandhi could not tolerate the destruction of many buildings in Britain. He became very emotional. As a matter of fact Gandhi, at this stage, began to doubt the efficacy of his non-violence but all the same he felt that violence was completely useless and he felt like sticking on to his non-violence. He wrote, "I have no manner of doubt that if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man." 261

The British Government came forward with an announcement on August 8, 1940 where it accepted the demand of the people to frame a constitution but it could not be done at a time when Britain was busy in a major war. Apart from this the large and powerful groups and elements in Indian society had also to give consent for such a move. Obviously the British Government had the Muslim League in its mind at this time. The Congress thought that the British Government was making it difficult for it and the Muslim League to reach a compromise. The Congress wanted to launch a mass Civil-Disobedience movement at this time but Gandhi opposed it and supported individual Civil Disobedience movement which would be restricted only to a selected group of individuals. He wanted his followers to observe many restraints eg. there should be no excitement in public and harassment

of the British authorities should be avoided. He acquainted the Viceroy of these and informed the District Magistrates of the time and place of Satyagraha. He was not in favour of public meetings. The slogan of the satyagrahis was that the war should be resisted non-violently.

Under this scheme individuals were to offer Satyagraha and not groups of individuals. Gandhi did not want to embarrass the Government nor did he like to exploit the farmers, the students or the mill labourers. The result was that the Government was not very vindictive in its approach. It was giving only mild sentences to the people offering Satyagraha. It wanted to avoid the increase of public excitement in this movement. Regarding the incidents of the 1942 movement, there was a correspondence between Gandhi and Linlithgow, the Viceroy who doubted the efficacy of Gandhi's policy of non-violence. Gandhi felt it very much and decided to go on a fast in order to get some consolation. He began his 21 days' fast on February 10, 1943. The Government was determined to tolerate it this time. It was in no mood to release him despite a danger of his death. Of course, the British Government was not very much affected by it but it certainly served the purpose of further educating the public opinion in the Gandhian techniques.

While talking to some Congress men from Midnapore who brought to his notice incidents of violence during 1942, Gandhi told them, "This is not the technique of non-violent action. People committed the mistake of thinking that all that did not involve killing was non-violence. Sometimes killing is the cleanest part of violence. If you kill the mischief maker outright there is an end of it so far

as he is concerned. But harassment is worse. It did not put out mischief. On the contrary it brought mischief on our heads. The authorities became vindictive. Perhaps you will say that they would have been vindictive any how; but that is not what we should desire or aim at. It does not pay us to let them go into panic. In August, 1942, the authorities became panicky. We gave them that excuse." 262

The eldest son of Gandhi, Hari Lal, was a problem child to his mother, Kasturbai. Once he was associated as a member with a bogus firm, 'All India Stores Ltd., of Lyallour, Punjab. Gandhi no more associated with this son of his because his law of love dictated cooperation with all that was right and non-cooperation with all that was evil.

Sometimes Gandhi's peaceful approach and philosophy was treated as a weak policy as was done by Winston Churchill, the war time British Prime Minister. Gandhi had requested Churchill on July 17, 1944 that he should be trusted. This request was ignored and concessional treatment to the Congress was not given. In this case Gandhi had written to a person who could not have been affected by his policy. Just on the eve of Independence wherever Gandhi would go, there would be large crowds to greet him. Some of these crowds were disciplined but some were not. Gandhi was much concerned about the growing wave of indiscipline in the country. He was concerned with mutual hatred also. He wrote, "Hatred is in the air and the impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it if they can, through violence, to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and anywhere...The result will be deeper hatred and counter hatred and vengeance let loose on both sides ...And yet if truth is told as it must be, our non-violent action has



been half hearted. Many have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast." 263

Before the grant of Independence, during the days of Direct Action of the Muslim League, Gandhi went to Bengal to bring peace in the midst of communal riots. He had always felt that, "to quell riots non-violently, there must be true ahimsa in one's heart, an ahimsa that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a result of patient effort which must be made during peaceful times...." 264 In Bengal at that time there was the Muslim League Premier, Suhrawardy who did not like the tour of Gandhi. He wanted Gandhi to leave Bengal but Gandhi would not do so. Gandhi became very critical about his own self. He began to feel that there was some defect in him if the Muslim League was not heeding his counsel. He felt that there was darkness all round him. After Independence Delhi was also affected by communal uprising of an intense variety. Gandhi did not like it and would not rest content unless peace had returned to the town. So on January 13, 1948 he started his fast, perhaps his greatest fast which he was determined not to end unless peace came to Delhi. Though there was efficient administration and absence of murders etc., yet Gandhi wanted that the hearts of the Hindus and the Muslims should be reunited. He wanted safety for the Muslims and disliked the activities of the displaced persons from West Pakistan at that time in Delhi.

Due to this fast and the attitude of Gandhi, India was shaken

263. Harjan, February 24, 1946, p.20.

264. Harjan, September 15, 1940, p.285.

up emotionally. In Pakistan Gandhi was eulogized. It became an emergent situation and the Government of India, in a hurry and to create an atmosphere of goodwill, paid Rupees Fifty Five crores to Pakistan. This sum of money was to be given to Pakistan out of the assets of United India. It had not been given so far due to a flare-up in Kashmir. Representatives of the various parties took a pledge to maintain peace in Delhi and this pledge was taken in the presence of Gandhi. Gandhi repeated what he had told the people at Calcutta that if they could not implement the pledge he would again go on a fast which would be a fast unto death. Gandhi said that by following non-violence as an expediency, the freedom struggle could succeed in India but that would bring about only such a machinery of democracy as would not evoke faith in democracy. If non-violence is followed as an expediency it would mean the utilization of non-violence for profit and also of violence, if so required. This would be the non-violence of the weak and under it the real democracy would not be there i.e. there would be no equality in society. If non-violence were not used with firm faith, after Independence there would be a struggle for power.

He believed that non-violence of the weak "if long practised may even render us forever unfit for self-Government."<sup>265</sup> Further, "the constant attempt of a democratic Government must be to give proper education to the people and also otherwise provide conditions which make all citizens fearless...Non-violence is a concept which has come from the same philosophy."<sup>266</sup> When non-violence is followed as

265. Harlian, July 13, 1940, p.197.

266. Krishna Kumar, Democracy And Non-Violence - A Study Of Their Relationship, p.65. (Delhi Citizens' Peace Committee, Sponsored by Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1968)

a way of life it means that evil and injustice should be fought in a non-violent manner. The true test of Satyagraha is in times of real conflict. One should himself have firm faith in non-violence first. "Non-violence begins and ends by turning the search light inward."<sup>267</sup> A satyagrahi must, first of all, aim at his own internal development before he starts to use it against others for, "...the votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear...This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves we should learn to...mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships...."<sup>268</sup>

Gandhi attached great importance to the non-violence of the brave which was the ultimate ideal, but difficult to be attained by everybody in society. "The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the ahimsa of the brave is first to clear one's thought of cowardice and, in the light of the clearance, regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small...."<sup>269</sup> But continuous efforts to realize this ideal must be made. Gandhi wrote, "Ahimsa is the religion of a Kshatriya. Mahavira was a Kshatriya, Buddha was a Kshatriya, Rama and Krishna were Kshatriyas and all of them were votaries of Ahimsa. We want to propagate ahimsa in their name. But today ahimsa has become the monopoly of timid Vaishnavas and that is why it has been besmirched. Ahimsa is the extreme limit of forgiveness. But forgiveness is the quality of the brave. Ahimsa is impossible without fearlessness."<sup>270</sup>

267. Harjan, April 20, 1940, p.98.

268. Harjan, September 1, 1940, p.263.

269. Harjan, November 17, 1946, p.404.

270. Young India, November 4, 1926, p.384.

The path of the satyagrahi will always be difficult due to obstructions in the world and that is why the satyagrahi should inculcate some sterling qualities like courage and patience, initiative and a curious temperament. "Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives." 271 Gandhi lays much emphasis upon one's own conscience as a guiding factor for action. He suggests a way to have purity, "As soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is Ahimsa in his venture." 272 A satyagrahi cannot be a war-monger. He is wedded to peace essentially and he does not believe in having a blue print for struggles because, "that is the beauty of satyagraha. It comes up to oneself, one has not to go in search for it. That is a virtue inherent in the principle itself. A dharma yudha, in which there are no secrets to be guarded, no scope for cunning and no place for untruth, comes unsought; and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle." 273 Satyagraha and social service are directly related. It is not a device to further or consolidate personal gains. If there are things which have been obtained by means which are not moral, they cannot be defended or protected by non-violent methods. A satyagrahi has to be humble. "The seeker after Truth should

271. Harijan, February 21, 1940, p.211.

272. R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao, The Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.270. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1967)

273. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.XIV. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after Truth should so humble himself, that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of Truth." 274 Further, "The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours." 275 It is true that, "the spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility... A non-cooperationist strives to compel attention and to set an example not by his violence, but by his unobtrusive humility. He allows his solid action to speak for his creed." 276 A satyagrahi, while launching the non-violent struggle, has to distinguish between small and big injustice and it is for the latter only that non-violent methods are to be used; the former being ignored mostly. Gandhi believed that one should not fear injustice. "A man who has realized his manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else. Man-made laws are not necessarily binding on him." 277

The aim of the satyagrahi is to convert the opponent and make him realize his mistake. It can never amount to humiliation of the other party. To Gandhi, "the essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists." 278

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274. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.XV.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)
275. Amar Nath, Recollections Of And About Mahatma Gandhi, p.123.  
(Star Publications, Delhi, 1969)
276. Ronald Duncan, Selected Writings Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.74.  
(Faber & Faber, London)
277. Homer A. Jack, The Gandhi Reader, p.113.
278. Harjan, April 29, 1939, p.101.

Again, "the end of non-violent war is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent."<sup>279</sup> The satyagrahi should not depend upon physical and brute force i.e. there is no scope for violence in his action, thought or speech for the opponent. So in the negative sense the satyagrahi has to avoid all violence. He has to love his opponent. "Scientists tell us that, without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist, and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so much must there be in all things animate, and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is love."<sup>280</sup> Further, violence cannot be used in a spirit of love. "A calf was lame and had developed terrible sores; he could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and my co-workers, I put an end to its life. Now that action was non-violent because it was wholly unselfish, in as much as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain."<sup>281</sup>

In the positive sense, "a Satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, himsa by ahimsa."<sup>282</sup> The satyagrahi should lay all emphasis upon the points of agreement between him and his opponent because Gandhi believed that, "Family disputes and differences are generally settled according to the law of love. The injured member has so much regard

279. Harizan, March 23, 1940, p.53.

280. Young India, May 5, 1920, p.7.

281. Homer A. Jack, The Gandhi Reader, p.312.

282. Young India, August 8, 1929, p.263.

for the others that he suffers injuries for the sake of his principles without retaliating and without being angry with those who differ from him. And as repression of anger, self suffering, are difficult processes, he does not magnify trifles into principles, but in all non-essentials readily agrees with the rest of the family, and thus contrives to gain the maximum of peace for himself without disturbing that of others. Thus his action, whether he resists or resigns, is always calculated to promote the common welfare of the family." 283

The satyagrahi believes in the goodness of human nature and that is why he does not like to bring into prominence the bad points of the other party. Gandhi asked the Congress in 1940 to concentrate on the good actions of the Government only, but he felt that, "there can be no question of Congress asking or expecting Britain to dishonour just obligations or treaties. What, however, I miss is a sincere desire on the part of Britain to do unto India what she would wish done to her...." 284

The satyagrahi has not to give up the path of truth and non-violence. To convert the opponent he will have to resort to the methods of persuasion. He is to be fearless also for which firm belief in God is essential. "Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the supreme, as it implies the height of freedom from delusions. But one can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour and by increasing confidence in oneself...." 285

The satyagrahi has to keep every window open for

283. G.M. Dhawan, Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p.152.

284. Harlian, March 23, 1940, p.53.

285. R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao, The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, p.59.

the refreshing breeze of correct judgement. If he is in the wrong, he should not mind to correct himself after reviewing his activities because Gandhi felt, "the solitary Satyagrahi has to examine himself. If he has universal love and if he fulfils the conditions implied in such a state, it must find expression in his daily conduct."<sup>286</sup> Again Gandhi said, "As a Satyagrahi I must always allow my cards to be examined and reexamined at all times and make reparation if an error is discovered."<sup>287</sup> The opponent of the satyagrahi may sometimes be under the spell of ignorance which forces him to be selfish. So the satyagrahi will try to persuade him, negotiate and discuss with him the right action and point of view and if the opponent does not come round by these, the satyagrahi may ask a third party to arbitrate between him and the opponent.

A satyagrahi is always ready for an honourable settlement with the opponent but he has not to arrive at a compromise with issues which are not moral. He cannot surrender his moral principles. "The Satyagrahi, whilst he is ever ready for fight, must be equally eager for peace. He must welcome any honourable opportunity for peace."<sup>288</sup> Gandhi would never compromise if the basic issues were at stake. Gandhi believed that in the path of Satyagraha negotiations and compromise are essential at some stage or the other because if they are attempted in the very beginning, the conflict may be avoided. The satyagrahi should lay emphasis upon his moral strength. Gandhi

286. Harijan, August 4, 1940, p.235.

287. Harijan, March 11, 1939, p.44.

288. Young India, March 19, 1931, p.40.



said, "I believe that I have an unflinching faith in God. For many years I have accorded intellectual assent to the proposition that death is only a big change in life and nothing more, and should be welcome whenever it arrives...the strength of the spirit within mostly evaporates when a man gets and accepts support from outside."

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If the satyagrahi fails in his negotiations, it is an occasion for him to fight but, "he needs no previous preparation, his cards are always on the table. Suspension or continuation of battle is one and the same thing to him. He fights or refrains from fighting to gain precisely the same end."<sup>290</sup> Before the satyagrahi launches direct action, he will try other means like persuasion and discussion. He will keep an eye on the public opinion which he must continuously educate in these principles. First the satyagrahi will try to appeal to the good sense and reason of the opponent but if he is not moved, he will appeal to his sentiments which he will try by causing suffering to his own self. "If one has... pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility...."<sup>291</sup> Gandhi had great faith in self-suffering for he said, "nothing can shake me from the conviction that given a good cause, suffering for it advances it as nothing else has done."<sup>292</sup> Suffering should be a matter of pleasure to the satyagrahi who, in order to bear it, should be disciplined highly.

One has to appeal to the reason of the other party but apart from it more important is the appeal to the heart. It develops inner

289. N.K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p.213. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

290. Young India, April 16, 1931, p.77.

291. Harijan, January 28, 1939, p.442.

292. Young India, II, p.333. (S. Ganesan, Madras, 1927)

understanding in the opponent of the real injustice done to the satyagrahi. By sticking to ahimsa and resorting to self-suffering the satyagrahi will change the whole atmosphere and finally it may affect the whole world. By the quality of purity in his suffering, the satyagrahi elevates the spirit of the opponent also and due to his love-force public opinion too comes in his favour. Gandhi believed that if the physical force did not receive a physical challenge, it would lose its dynamism and would not retaliate. Gandhi wrote in 1924, "It has been my invariable experience that good evokes good, evil, evil; and that therefore, if the evil does not receive the corresponding response, it ceases to act, dies of want of nutrition. Evil can only live upon itself."<sup>293</sup> This is the psychological explanation given by Gandhi for the effect of the good.

The satyagrahi, by following non-violence, affects the opponent unconsciously, in an invisible manner. "Non-violence is an intensely active force when properly understood and used."<sup>294</sup> Gandhi believed that under exploitation there was a cooperation between the exploiter and the exploited and if the latter did not cooperate with the former, he could not succeed in his efforts of exploitation. Hence the satyagrahi, by his moral superiority, upsets the opponent, who, due to the satyagrahi's efforts will have no feelings of hostility ultimately. If the opponent is beyond any remedy, even then there is no harm because in that situation, the opponent will find himself isolated. No doubt the satyagrahi starts his struggle on the basis of suffering but even then he cannot afford to show off. To the satyagrahi suffering should be automatic and not something for which one has to make efforts.

<sup>293</sup>. Young India, May 15, 1924, p.161.

<sup>294</sup>. Harlian, March 20, 1937, p.41.

A satyagrahi has to contain his temper and develop his spirituality.

Gandhi thought that one of the best weapons of a satyagrahi is non-cooperation of the non-violent variety. "An armed soldier relies on his weapons for his strength. Take away from him his weapons-his gun or his sword, and he generally becomes helpless. But a person who has truly realized the principle of non-violence has the God-given strength for his weapon and the world has not known anything that can match it."<sup>295</sup> The victim should never be a party to the tyranny of the opponent and he should refuse to cooperate. The search after truth by the satyagrahi is done by causing suffering to one's own self rather than to the opponent. If the oppressor can continue even without the cooperation of the satyagrahi, the latter's aim in such a situation is to purify himself but where the opponent cannot continue without the cooperation of the satyagrahi, non-cooperation becomes of the drastic sort where in some cases it may cause some inconvenience to the opposite party. The satyagrahi must create such an atmosphere as makes the opponent feel that he has got a good friend. "The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice."<sup>296</sup>

One of the most powerful weapons with a satyagrahi is fasting. It is distinct from non-cooperation as it is used in a limited field. Its misuse is by one who is not a satyagrahi and who resorts to a hunger strike. It is a delicate weapon and should be very carefully used. Fasting is the greatest device for self purification. "The

295. Harlian, November 19, 1939, pp.341-42.

296. Young India, February 19, 1925, p.61.

weakest of us physically must be taught the art of facing dangers and giving a good account of ourselves." 297 Fasting also brings about the supremacy of the spiritual over the material. Gandhi resorted to a five day fast in February 1922 after the Chauri-Chaura incident. This was done for self-purification so that he could have a greater moral strength. Fasting is also a device to do away with injustice and convert the person doing injustice. To Gandhi fasting was the language of the heart understood very well also by the masses. But fasting should not be resorted to frequently. Gandhi wrote, "If the struggle which we are seeking to avoid with all our might has come, and if it is to remain non-violent as it must in order to succeed, fasting is likely to play an important part in it. It has its place in the tussle with authority and with our own people in the event of wanton acts of violence and obstinate riots for instance." 298

Nobody should play with this device. It requires much skill and sufficient preparation. If it is done without these, it takes the form of a longer strike. In a satyagrahi fast there is a spiritual and moral overtone. Without these it cannot be undertaken, because if anger, impatience, selfishness, lack of faith in God are there the fast becomes violent. Apart from truth and non-violence, "...a Satyagrahi should have the confidence that, God will grant him necessary strength and that, if there is the slightest impurity in the fast, he will not hesitate to renounce it at once. Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose and perfect calm must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities, all at once, no one who has not devoted

297. Young India, February 20, 1921, p.335.

298. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace And War, Vol.I, p.463.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

himself to following the laws of ahimsa should undertake a satyagrahi fast." 299 Fasting is not a device for the masses because it has to be used by the selected and skilled persons only. When resorting to fasting, there should be the inner call of the satyagrahi's conscience to do so.

It has not to be started against one's opponent but only against one's nearest and dearest. Fasting is the very last device open to a satyagrahi. A fast of this variety can be observed against an individual or a group of persons. In Rajkot Gandhi resorted to a fast to make the ruler realize his mistake. In November, 1921 at Bombay, his fast was against the people who started riots against the visit of the Prince of Wales. He undertook fast in September, 1932 to make the Hindus realize their religious responsibility at a time when the British Government was planning to create separate electorates for the depressed classes. The fast at Calcutta from September 1 to 4 in 1947 was undertaken to stop the communal frenzy there. His fast from January 13 to 13, 1948 was an effort at communal harmony. Gandhi, of course, believed that fasting as a form of Satyagraha could not be used against an opponent but there are a few exceptions to this. He resorted to a fast against the British Government several times. Gandhi once resorted to a fast on August 16, 1933. It was observed in the jail and to demand the facility from the Government to guide the movement against untouchability from there. He had continued his fast for about a week when the Government released him.

Then he resorted to a fast of 21 days "according to capacity"

in 1943 in the Aga Khan Palace, Poona to express his protest against the British policies in India. The Government put the whole blame of the August, 1942 movement on Gandhi but it could not be proved. Gandhi insisted that the people had no alternative left to them due to the high-handed policy of the British Government. The extreme remedy in such cases is fasting. Gandhi believed that fasting could never be used to secure release of the prisoners but certainly it was a remedy against the in-human behaviour of the jail authorities. By fasting, an effort to appeal to the good and human sense of the opponent is made. Many criticisms are made against this device. Some feel that it is a method used to put pressure on the opposite party. Fasting in some cases may assume the form of coercion rather than conversion of the opponent. A man of great stature can bring about the atmosphere of coercion where the opponent is forced to yield to the demands of a satyagrahi.

Gandhi thought that fasting was not a hurdle in the growth of democracy. It is violence which checks the growth of democracy. He realized that there was danger in the frequent use of fasting as a method of Satyagraha. That is why he was for its use very rarely and that too by experts. The greatest asset of a satyagrahi is his moral or soul force. A satyagrahi has to mainly depend upon his internal strength because, "...the strength of the spirit within mostly evaporates when a person gets and accepts support from outside. A satyagrahi must always be on his guard against such temptations." 300 Most of the crimes in society are due to property or women. A satyagrahi is to be inspired by the ideal of non-possession and bread-labour. He has to hold only that much which is just sufficient

300. M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha In South Africa*, p.287.  
(Navajivan Ahmedabad, 1950)

must be, always to his heart." 304 Further it, "...should never excite contempt in the opponent even when it fails to command regard or respect." 305 Gandhi believed that non-violence and not coercion should be used against the criminals. Gandhi said, "If the function of himsa is to devour all it comes across, the function of Ahimsa is to rush into the mouth of himsa. In an atmosphere of ahimsa one has no scope to put his ahimsa to the test. It can be tested only in the face of himsa." 306

Gandhi believed that the word criminal should not be used because under this definition a vast majority of the population is criminal. "The rich, moneyed man, who made his riches by exploitation or other questionable means, was no less guilty of robbery than the thief who picked a pocket or broke into a house and committed theft. Only the former took refuge behind the facade of respectability and escaped the penalty of law. Strictly speaking...all amassing or hoarding of wealth, above and beyond one's legitimate requirements, was theft." 307 According to Gandhi crime is a disease, a result of the evils of the social structure. The Government still believes in the theory of revenge and striking fear in the mind of the criminal. In such an atmosphere the talk of reform is simply idle. Gandhi was an idealist, In his non-violent state though he would allow a few crimes yet no one was to be named a criminal because under his concept no one was to be hated. If some one committed a mistake he was to be reformed but a basic belief in non-violence on the part of the

304. Harlian, March 25, 1939, p.64.

305. Harlian, May 6, 1939, p.113.

306. Harlian, May 17, 1939, p.121.

307. Harlian, August 11, 1946, p.255.

individual is fundamental to the existence of the non-violent state.

Regarding women, Gandhi said that they are the best persons to be non-violent but they have to revolutionize their ways of thinking and living by adopting the simple way of life and rejecting the modern attractive way of dressing which attracts other persons towards them. A woman has to think that she cannot be the object of the lust of man. She has to approach the ideal of purity because Gandhi thought that, "the veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity."<sup>308</sup> He also believed that, "...it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or ~~does~~ not realize her moral strength."<sup>309</sup> The satyagrahi friend should also stand between the victim and the person trying to attack her and be prepared to die. Similarly the woman should also be ready to die.

In the face of kidnapping also, a woman has not to surrender

herself to the kidnappers. She should be ready to finish her own life but not to violent to the person kidnapping her. It may convert them. Under true non-violence the satyagrahi has to think that the

criminal and he himself are one and thus it is better for the satyagrahi to die rather than kill the criminal. Non-violent ways and

methods are the direct results of a belief in real non-violence.

Gandhi believed, "I know that when we have real non-violence in us,

a non-violent way out is bound, without effort, to occur to us when

we find ourselves in a difficult situation."<sup>310</sup> The satyagrahi with a

308. Young India, II, p.862.  
(S. Ganeshan, Madras, 1927)

309. Harlian, September 1, 1940, p.266.

310. Harlian, February 17, 1940, p.8.



real non-violent approach should have love and pity towards the evil-doer. Its critics feel that non-violence might be alright in theory but in actual practice it is difficult to attain its high standards.

To Gandhi, "the weapon of ahimsa does not require supermen and super-women to wield it: beings of common clay can use and have used it before with success."<sup>311</sup> Gandhi also believed that the concept of non-violence should be taught to the people and first of all to the children. First, if a few people are non-violent, others will certainly follow suit. Though in theory Gandhi has an idealistic approach regarding non-violence, yet in his practical approach he makes concessions to human weakness. In theory, "A fully non-violent person is by nature incapable of using violence or rather has no use for it. His non-violence is all sufficing under all circumstances."<sup>312</sup> In practice he gives liberty to the satyagrahi to determine for himself as to what extent he can go on the path of non-violence. Even a satyagrahi is permitted to kill the opponent if he has to decide between cowardice and killing.

To Gandhi the scope of Satyagraha is wide indeed. "Satyagraha is no longer a cloistered virtue to be practised for individual peace or salvation. The life of a satyagrahi would be identified with that of humanity itself and be spent in incessant fights with aggression and exploitation. Satyagraha and evil in any shape or form are incompatible. So long as there is evil in this world, a Satyagrahi would know no rest, no peace. He would ask death and Salvation to wait till he has finished his task. He would be a constant crusader

311. Harlian, July 13, 1940, p.198.

312. Harlian, March 9, 1940, p.31.

in fresh fields and for new causes."313 Further, "he who has no belief in the constructive programme has...no concrete feeling for the starving millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently."314 When on the 20th January 1948 a bomb exploded at some small distance away from the venue of the prayer meeting Gandhi did not appear to have noticed it, nor did he harbour any feeling of ill-will against the person doing this nasty deed. It was really very strange that a person who was striving throughout his life for non-violence was killed by the bullets, a violent act of a Hindu, whose principles he represented in the greatest manner.

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313. R.R. Diwakar, Saga Of Satyagraha, p.45.  
(Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1969)

314. Harian, April 12, 1942, p.112.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROLE OF NON-VIOLENCE IN A NATION'S LIFE

Gandhi believed, "non-violence is not an individual virtue but a course of spiritual and political conduct both for the individual and the community."<sup>315</sup> In group life, due to violence, the very fabric of civilization, as it has evolved through the ages, stands in great danger of extinction. Due to the technique of Satyagraha and non-violence, there is a hope for oppressed humanity. When non-violence is used in national life, the non-violent power of a community is set against the power of suppression of the state. "One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it...and the law must apply to nations as to individuals."<sup>316</sup> Vast masses of people are involved in this struggle on both the sides. If one side prefers to choose the non-violent way, it becomes the application of Satyagraha on a mass level. Of course, Satyagraha can take the form of a community in a minority fighting against the injustice, perpetrated on it by the group which is in a majority. In India it was used by the whole nation against the British.

"Satyagraha comes as the last and yet as the most potent of peaceful weapons. After all other remedies such as constitutional agitation etc. have been exhausted Satyagraha steps in. It exactly takes the place of violent direct action. It comes in where violence would have been resorted to in the ordinary course if those in command

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315. Harijan, September 29, 1940, p.299.

316. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.I, pp.213-14.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942)

were to follow the usual methods of resistance and fighting."<sup>317</sup> In the society a mass non-violent struggle against injustice is necessary. Gandhi, however, says that in a well ordered state the occasions for civil resistance would be rare. He says, "It is rarely that the occasion for civil resistance rises in a well ordered state. But when it does, it becomes a duty that cannot be shirked by one who counts his honour i.e. his conscience above everything."<sup>318</sup> Of course, the people are to be trained and educated by leadership which has to make an effective use of the devices of propaganda, organization and discipline but even then mass-consciousness in this sphere is very necessary because "in this age of democracy, however, it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength."<sup>319</sup>

For the success of mass Satyagraha a dedicated and dynamic leader, trained in it, is very necessary to inspire and influence the people. Before starting a mass Satyagraha campaign, first of all appeal to reason must be made. When that appeal fails, Satyagraha has been advised by Gandhi. He said "My uniform experience is that true suffering melts the stoniest heart."<sup>320</sup> The leader has to be saturated

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317. R.R. Diwakar, Saga Of Satyagraha, p.61.  
(Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1969)
318. Krishna Kumar, ed., Democracy And Non-Violence - A Study Of Their Relationship, p.131.  
(Delhi Citizens' Peace Committee - Sponsored By Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1968)
319. Harifan, September 8, 1940, p.277.
320. R.R. Diwakar, SAGA OF SATYAGRAHA, p.61.

with the ideas of truth and non-violence; he has to practise non-possession and be God-fearing. The leader will use the energy of the masses sometimes for direct action and sometimes for constructive work. Some leaders may require to be trained regularly in an ashram while others like Gandhi may advance with their high sense of morality. Ashramas have a tendency to leave a permanent stamp on the personality of the inmates as Gandhi once wrote, "Whatever institution I touch, I end by converting it into an Ashram - I seem to know nothing else." 321

The mass non-violent movement, apart from a leader, needs an organization also and Gandhi wanted to model the Congress organization accordingly but it fell short of his expectations.

Gandhi, for the first time after his contact with the Congress made it a mass organization. Before this period it was only a middle class organization. Gandhi wanted the Congress to follow a non-violent and truthful path but the Congress chose the words peaceful and legitimate instead. Gandhi wrote about the nature of non-cooperation. He wrote that, "the beauty of Satyagraha, of which non-cooperation is but a chapter, is that it is available to either side in a fight, that it has checks that automatically work for the vindication of truth and justice for that side, whichever it may be, that has truth and justice in prepondering measure. It is as powerful and faithful a weapon in the hand of the capitalist as that of the labourer. It is as powerful in the hands of the government, as in that of the people...." 322

Gandhi wanted the Congress to follow non-violence as a creed but it preferred to follow it as a policy only i.e. one, which, after its limited purpose or failure, could be abandoned.

321. Harizan, September 1, 1946, p.291.

322. Young India, I, p.52.

Gandhi said, "Our non-violence need not be of the strong but it has to be of the truthful."<sup>323</sup> Congress began to follow non-violence as a matter of expediency rather than as a creed. The Congress passed resolutions on July 7, 1940 at Delhi and on July 27, 1940 at Poona by which for sometime Gandhi's leadership was done away with and the British Government was promised support by the Congress if they agreed to recognize the independence of India. The British Government did not agree to this. Again on the 15th September, 1940 by a resolution at Bombay, Gandhi was recognised its leader and then the Congress promised to accent non-violence not only in the freedom struggle of India but also in independent India. Gandhi's faith was that, "we have cause to be proud of the fact, that for a long series of centuries, beset with vicissitudes of stupendous proportion, crowded with things that are incongruous and facts that are irrelevant, India still keeps alive the inner principle of her own civilization against the cyclonic fury of contradictions and the gravitational pull of the past."<sup>324</sup> But Gandhi's faith was belied when the Congress did not use non-violence in independent India.

In matters of internal decision, though the majority was important to Gandhi yet the minority was not to be ignored but "where there is no principle involved and there is a programme to be carried out the minority has got to follow the majority."<sup>325</sup> The minority had a right to differ from the majority but then it should try to convert others non-violently and not obstruct the path of the majority. In an organization which is non-violent there is no scope

323. Young India, I, p.288.

324. Harlian, November 13, 1937, p.336.

325. Harlian, August 11, 1940, p.244.

for power-politics. After 1937, the Congress was faced with the existence of groups within it which did not believe in its creed but believed in obstruction. In the Satyagraha campaign, in a struggle of non-violence, the suppressed minority everywhere is liable to gain. Violent action is not the answer for the injustice suffered by the minority because it can be suppressed easily. Gandhi commented about the Jewish minority in Germany by saying, "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 may, and challenge him to shoot me or to cast me into a dungeon. I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment."<sup>326</sup>

Further Gandhi's discussion with the Premier of NWFP was quoted thus: "in South Africa a small band of 13000 Satyagrahi country men of ours were able to hold their own against the might of the Union Government. General Smuts could not turn them out as he was able to do with the 50,000 chinese who were driven out bag and baggage in less than six months and that without compensation. He would not have hesitated to crush us if we had strayed from the path of non-violence."<sup>327</sup> In a non-violent war as the Congress was waging against the British, there has to be complete discipline in the organization. But all the same Gandhi felt that, "the fear is always there that the state may use too much violence against those who differ from it."<sup>328</sup> Even then it must stick to the path of non-violence. Towards the end of his life, Gandhi felt about the Congress that it had no more use as a

326. K. Shridharani, War Without Violence, p.97.  
(Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1939)

327. K. Shridharani, War Without Violence, p.97.

328. R.K. Prabhu And U.R. Rao, The Mind Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.135.

parliamentary and propaganda machinery and he wished the Congress organization in that form to dissolve itself and take the form of a Lok Sevak Sangh which could be highly democratic.

Gandhi believed in having the support of the village worker for constructive work. He said about the village worker that, "he would be bound with the poorest in the village by ties of service. He would constitute himself the scavenger, the nurse, the arbitrator of disputes and the teacher of the children of the village...His house will be a busy hive of useful activities centering round spinning." 329

Further he believed that a non-violent civilization could not flourish on the factory system. "It can be built on self contained villages." 330 of course he welcomed, "simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of millions...." 331 But at the same time he believed that machinery, "must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour." 332

Apart from leadership and discipline, journalism also plays an important part because in South Africa his struggle would have been impossible without the journal 'Indian Opinion' and in India without weeklies like Young India and Harijan. The press, according to Gandhi, should be free and fearless. It should make an effort to educate public opinion and bring into prominence the defects in the state. Newspapers should be self-supporting. If there are restrictions imposed by the Government, either the publication of the newspaper should be

329. Harijan, August 4, 1940, p.235.

330. Harijan, November 1939, p.331.

331. Young India, II, p.797.

332. Young India, II, p.713.



stopped or all the consequences, associated with its publication should be faced. If the publication is stopped, hand sheets should be circulated among the people. When the Satyagraha started in 1940-41, there was a fear of the Government suppressing the Congress press. Then Gandhi wrote, "let everyone become his own walking newspaper and carry the good news from mouth to mouth...This no Government can overtake or suppress. It is the cheapest newspaper yet devised, and it defies the wit of the Government, however clever it may be. Let these walking newspapers be sure of the news they give." 333

Gandhi attached great importance to constructive work of a satyagrahi. Gandhi wrote, "constructive work, therefore, is for a non-violent army what drilling etc. is for an army designed for bloody war fare. Individual civil disobedience among an unprepared people and by leaders not known to or trusted by them is of no avail and mass civil disobedience is an impossibility. The more therefore the progress of the constructive programme, the greater is there the chance of civil disobedience." 334 Again in 1930, Gandhi wrote, "constructive programme is not essential for local civil disobedience for specific relief, as in the case of Bardoli. Tangible common grievance restricted to a particular locality is enough. But for such an undefinable thing as swaraj people must have previous training in doing things of All India interest." 335 To Gandhi constructive work was more important than political work for he wrote, "...my work of social reform was in no way less than or subordinate to

333. Harlian, November 10, 1940, p.334.

334. Young India, January 9, 1930, p.13.

335. Young India, January 9, 1930, p.13.

political work. The fact is, that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must, therefore, confess that work of social reform or self purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work." 336

The work of social reform is important because it will not arouse violent feelings in the opponent while direct action does. Gandhi wrote, "if we wish to achieve swaraj through Truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way." 337 Constructive programme has the tendency to do away with exploitation and injustice in society and it is an effort to enthuse the people to live in a natural and simple way. Gandhi wished to introduce economic equality in the society but not of the absolute variety. He wrote, "Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by everyone. It does mean, however, that everyone will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat and sufficient Khadi with which to cover himself. It also means that the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed purely by non-violent means." 338 To achieve this first of all the satyagrahi has to lead a simple life for Gandhi wrote, "I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point

336. Young India, August 6, 1931, p.203.

337. Harlian, January 18, 1942, p.4.

338. Harlian, August 18, 1940, p.253.

of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but straightaway make a beginning with myself...For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor." 339

For this Gandhi was in favour of Khadi, small-scale industries and removal of untouchability. To Gandhi the spinning wheel was the manifestation of non-violence for he wrote, "Ahimsa must express itself through acts of self-less service of the masses. I cannot think of a better symbol or medium for its expression than the spinning wheel." 340 In national life he was for prohibition and communal unity. In communal disturbances one should learn the art of defending oneself non-violently and of defending one's self respect even by putting one's life at stake. Then to eschew violence from our midst, Gandhi laid emphasis upon basic education. The first experiment in the field of non-violent resistance to evil was done by Gandhi in South Africa where vast numbers of people were involved in the struggle for their rights and justice against a Government which would deny all these to them. It was done there by the people under Gandhi's leadership. It was also a struggle by the Indians against the Europeans who formed the Government.

Indians were the weaker section of the society there as compared to the strong Government which was of the Europeans. Indians were lagging behind socially and economically but their main tussle with the ruling authority was regarding the political justice which

339. Harlian, March 31, 1946, p.64.

340. Harlian, May 6, 1939, p.113.

they wanted. Satyagraha campaign of the Indians was directed towards this end finally. The Satyagraha campaign in South Africa began in 1906 and continued till 1914 with breaks. Finally the Indian community was victorious only by the use of the method of non-violence or Satyagraha. Before Satyagraha campaign was launched in South Africa, grievances of Indians regarding many issues-political, social and economic-were there. Before this the Indian community was a mute spectator of the policy of ruthless suppression, pursued by the South African Government. It was not a democratic state otherwise it would have behaved in a different way. Gandhi believed, "in democracy the individual will was governed and limited by the social will which was the state, which was governed by and for democracy."<sup>341</sup>

As a matter of fact with the beginning of Satyagraha started their first real struggle of courageous opposition to the unjust policies of the South African Government. The Indians went there as indentured labourers on the invitation of European planters and mine owners. They were to remain there for five years. It means they were purchased on a mass scale and were brought there under a contract deed. To bring about their import, the Indian Agents were there. After the five year period of contract was over, the more adventurous of these began to have their independent establishments in the form of agricultural farms and other business concerns. Some would own only small plots of land but would produce great quantity of vegetables as the time passed they became very active competitors of the European businessmen. The strength of the Indians increased when many more Indians went there for retail business. When the number increased

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341. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace & War, Vol.II, p.315.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

lawyers and doctors also followed them. By the end of 1894 the number of indentured labourers was 60,000; the number of free Indians was 10,000; the number of Zulus was 400,000; and that of Europeans was 40,000. A few thousand more Indians went there.

The Europeans thought that the Indians had come there for their own self interest and ultimately to give the Europeans a tough competition. They did not realize the great contribution made by the Indian community there in establishing agricultural farms, tapping the natural resources and other things. When the Indian community had developed the land and the various activities well, the Europeans began to frame laws and rules under which it would be difficult for the Indians to remain there. There was a regular effort then to oust the Indians from South Africa. Indians began to be harassed and robbed. Then the Europeans began to find the answer in law in order to create a situation for the Indians in which they would themselves leave South Africa. In 1906 a bill was introduced in the legislature by the Transvaal Government whose purpose was that every Indian should be registered with the Government by giving his finger prints. Like a criminal he was supposed also to produce a certificate of registration, when demanded by a policeman to do so.

Any person who did not register himself would be sent out of South Africa. Gandhi wrote about it, "I saw nothing in it except hatred of Indians. It seemed to be that if the Ordinance was passed and the Indians meekly accepted it, that would spell absolute ruin for the Indians in South Africa... Better die than submit to such a law." 342 There was so much of bad treatment, being given to the

342. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.99.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1923)

Indians that it appeared that there was a full plan to do away with the establishments, brought about by the Indians after a tough struggle. Indians did not like the Bill for the registration of finger prints to be passed and hence there was a very big protest by the Indians against it and they wanted their case to be heard by the authorities. Many mass meetings were held where Indians passed resolutions against the policy of high handedness of the Government but to no avail. Despite so much of opposition the Government of Transvaal passed this bill which added insult to the injury of Indians. They considered it also an indirect insult to their country. All efforts at negotiation and arbitration etc. having failed, the Indians sought some other remedy in direct action. A revolution with arms could not be launched because the Indians there had not been trained in arms etc. Moreover a violent approach to the settlement of such problems was out of question in the case of Hindus at least who were in a vast majority there also as Indian settlers.

Once the Indians assembled in a big meeting to discuss this problem without any idea of the possible course of action in the near future against the policy of the Government. People could not think of any plan. In the mean time a small man, M.K. Gandhi, came to occupy the plat-form. He shouted hoarse in that crowd and took a pledge that he would not obey that law despite his imprisonment in the future. "The most important among the resolutions passed by the meeting was the famous Fourth Resolution, by which the Indians solemnly determined not to submit to the Ordinance in the event of its becoming law in the teeth of their opposition and to suffer all the penalties

attaching to such non-submission." 343 Many Indians repeated this performance. No body knew the significance of it but Gandhi's Satyagraha movement, Civil Disobedience movement, at this time had begun. The Transvaal Government was not quiet. It started its policy of suppression and imprisonment of the satyagrahis. People would not mind it. Gandhi was imprisoned also and many people followed him to prison.

The Indians giving civil resistance to the Government began to go to the prisons with pleasure and thus again the rule of terror was rendered completely useless by their valiant behaviour. The struggle of the satyagrahis continued and hence the law did not become effective immediately. Moreover, the cases of sacrifice by the Indians were there daily and the Europeans were observing this from close quarters. By this act of the satyagrahis the European community became conscious of its injustice towards the Indians. General Smuts visited Gandhi in prison and said that the law could be annulled if Indians would get themselves registered without the force of the Government. On it Gandhi gave an assurance to do so but the

General went back on his words. The struggle thus continued. The Government of Transvaal became more strict in its attitude towards Indians. According to a decision of the supreme court in 1913 all Hindu and Mohammedan marriages became invalid. The purpose was to debar the Indian children from the right of inheriting property by making them illegitimate issues. It was designed to oust the Indians who could now not compete with the local population in business. The Indian community was not in a mood to take such a law lying.

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343. M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha In South Africa, p.102.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1928)

After this act Indian women also decided to participate in the struggle. The non violent struggle under Satyagraha provided an opportunity to men and women to become active. Indian women represented their case to Gandhi and requested him to give them a lead in their effort and struggle. Gandhi advised them to begin civil disobedience and exert economic pressure on the Government. At this time Indian women were used as the spearhead of this struggle. Indians were not allowed to cross the territory between Transvaal and Natal. So some women went beyond the border of Transvaal and even began to picket near the Natal Mines. The administration was equal to the task and put most of these women behind the bars. This news spread like wild fire in the neighbourhood and among the mine labour of Natal. Some five thousand labourers came out of the mines and resorted to strike to a man. All of them decided to march to Transvaal on foot. They began to proceed towards Transvaal in an enthusiastic mood, singing religious and patriotic songs. Gandhi was with them and during this march he had been arrested thrice. Despite his arrest the participants would stick to non-violence. In the end all of them were thrown behind the bars. The satyagrahis did not bother about it. For them it was a success because without much effort, their scheme succeeded.

All these imprisonments had a great effect on the public opinion. In India and in South Africa people were sympathetic towards the satyagrahis. Everybody was pained by the fact that the authorities had beaten up the miners some of whom were wounded also. Despite much provocation and humiliation the labourers from India remained within the dignified limits prescribed by the Satyagraha movement. They never became violent. This was very well done. The Government was



in a miserable condition at this time. The movement launched by Gandhi had made an impact everywhere. The press in the world was supporting the action of the satyagrahis. There was increasing tension in India. Added to already existing worries for the Government, there began a strike by the European Railwaymen in South Africa. The confusion of the Government now was worse confounded. At this time Gandhi began to follow a master strategy by not adding to the botheration of the Government. It is the general rule of Satyagraha that kindness should be shown to the opponent. One should show civility to the opponent. Civility does not mean, "mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good."<sup>344</sup>

By so doing the opposite party will become aware of the good intentions of the satyagrahis. The satyagrahis do not add to the embarrassment or difficulties of the opposite party. Rather in their hour of crisis they try to help them. In other forms of struggle such an opportunity is capitalized by the fighters so that the enemy or opposite party is cornered from all the sides. The satyagrahi on the other hand, believes in bringing about a change of heart of the opponent. Gandhi, according to this principle of Satyagraha, stopped his struggle for some time until at least the strike by the Railwaymen was over. The European population praised this move of Gandhi and thus the Indian cause had a favourable climate then. The administration of General Smuts also became mild towards the Indians. Already there was a change in the public opinion. Gandhi brought about a

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344. M.K. Gandhi, Autobiography Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, Vol. II, p.435. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1929)

change of heart and due to these General Smuts yielded. The important demands of the Indians were favourably considered and granted. Now there was no more necessity for registering the finger prints; the tax of three £ each on Indians was also annulled. Once again the Mohammedan and Hindu marriages were validated. The Government came forward with a promise that it would protect the just rights of the Indians in South Africa and also the entry into South Africa of educated Indians was no more banned. It was quite a good success of Satyagraha by a group of people against a powerful Government.

After South Africa Satyagraha was tried and experimented upon in India. Gandhi came to India in 1915 after his successful Satyagraha campaign in South Africa. Once some persons went beyond the British line at Viramgam, a railway junction in Western India. They did so in order to go to their native states in Kathiawar. These travellers were the subjects of the Princely states. At the time of crossing, these passengers were insulted. Gandhi was approached with a request to help them in bringing a stop to this sort of treatment. People also told him their inability to bring the authorities round despite many petitions etc. After this Gandhi took up this issue with his characteristic sincerity. He went from door to door, from village to village appealing to the people to be ready for a Satyagraha campaign if it was found necessary. Simultaneously he wrote a series of letters to the Viceroy, directing his attention to this problem. The Civil Investigation Department informed the Viceroy that Gandhi was preparing the background for a mass non-violent struggle against the Government measures.

People were becoming restless for an agitation. When the Viceroy learnt about these preparations, he immediately agreed to meet Gandhi and the whole problem was solved in an atmosphere of cordiality. Gandhi wrote, "I communicated with the Government of India, but got no reply beyond an acknowledgement. It was only when I had an occasion to meet Lord Chelmsford later that redress could be had."<sup>345</sup> In this case injustice to the people was done away with without any resort to direct action and violence. The success of the people was due to the possibility of a Satyagraha movement in the immediate future. Here it is to be noted that actual Satyagraha was not begun at all and there was only the possibility due to which alone the matter came to a successful conclusion. After this it was tried several times when the Government was unjust to the farmers.

In 1917 again non-violent policy was adopted in connection with a problem in Bihar. In Champaran the farmers of Bihar were given a very rough treatment by the landlords there. The farmers had to pay to the landlords much more than what came to them as the produce from their soil. They had also to devote 3/20 of their land to the indigo plantation which was not profitable at all. Here the condition of the farmers and workers was really very miserable and this could not be tolerated at all. Many people of the locality tried to bring about a settlement between the landlords and the farmers regarding their wages and related matters but to no avail. Then the people requested Gandhi to come to their rescue. Gandhi, accompanied, by a few friends went to Champaran in order first to enquire into the case before launching any major programme. They established their head-

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345. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography Or The Story Of My Experiments With Truth, p.279. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

-quarters at a central place in the District of Champaran where they would hear the grievances of the people. They continued this process for several days without any publicity etc. in the newspapers. But the plantation owners became fearful of the consequences because it was their very authority which was now in question.

They knew it very well that when the farmers were sufficiently enlightened, they would be in much trouble. So they approached the District Magistrate with a request that Gandhi should be ordered to leave the District. Gandhi knew about this eventuality. He had taken sufficient precautions in this direction by appointing a series of successors who would be actively working for the cause of the suffering farmers in case he was arrested. The plan was that in the event of his arrest, a committee of persons would take over the charge of the struggle. The District Magistrate served an order on Gandhi to leave the District but he did not comply. Then summons was issued directing Gandhi to appear in the court for the purpose of a trial. Gandhi in this situation pleaded guilty and brought his defence to a close by saying <sup>the words,</sup> "I venture to make this statement not in any way of extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience."<sup>346</sup>

The judge's position now was a bit awkward. This case was getting publicity not only in the province of Bihar but throughout the whole country. The judge was fearful of the consequences of not

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346. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, p. 305. (Nava Jivan, Ahmedabad, 1959 - Popular Edition)

allowing a person of the stature of Gandhi to hold an enquiry into the case. He postponed his judgement. At this juncture the Governor of the province intervened and asked the judge to withdraw the case. He also set up a Government Commission to look into the labour grievances and the complaints of the peasants. The Governor was of the opinion that Gandhi should represent the case of the farmers on the commission. Finally the Commission recommended that the grievances of the peasants were genuine and the planters and landlords should remove them immediately. The satyagrahis were non-violent throughout and achieved marvellous success. After the success of Satyagraha at Champaran, the labourers and workers of India began to look towards Gandhi for the redress of their grievances. They were impressed with this new weapon of struggle. Before this example with them, they would not resort to strike which amounted in certain cases to leaving their jobs and certainly did not prepare a favourable public opinion.

Strike is devoid of spiritual overtones. So they began to look forward to Satyagraha which would give a new form to their struggle against the ruthless suppression of the landlords and others. After the Champaran struggle was over, Gandhi was invited by the mill workers of Ahmedabad to champion their cause. The workers had many grievances there against their employers. They were given very low wages and zest had been left in their lives due to conditions of poverty and demerit. They were agitating in a vigorous manner through their organisations but without any success. The employers were not at all moved by their agitations and they did not come forward with any substantial feasible improvements in their lot. The labour leaders requested Gandhi to help them in their tussle with the factory owners.

Gandhi also suggested to the workers some sort of strike but not the traditional variety where force was used. He counselled them moderation where an effort would be made to change the heart of the opposite party in a Satyagraha movement.

Before resorting to a complete strike from work, Gandhi put forward before them four conditions:

1. They should be peaceful, abstaining from violence in all circumstances.
2. They should not harass their employers.
3. They would not depend upon public donations or charity during the whole period of strike.
4. They would not bend despite a possibility of the strike continuing for long.

Gandhi, was concerned, of course with the issue of the livelihood of the workers and their families. This, he told them, should be managed by work outside the factories. If their earnings outside the factories were not sufficient, they had to accept starvation as a natural course i.e. they had to be ready for self-suffering. The workers took the pledge to abide by this and then it was the suitable occasion for Gandhi to give them a call to be ready for a non-violent strike. It "was a turning point in the labour employer relations in Ahmedabad. 'The principle and procedure of arbitration', writes Gulzari Lal Wanda, 'which have played so large a part in making the Textile Labour Association what it is today, were thus introduced in the industrial relations in this country for the first time'." 347 The

347. B.R. Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi, A Biography*, p.165.  
(George Allen & Unwin, London, 1953)

struggle had continued for twenty one days when Gandhi was in touch with the employers. A settlement in the favour of workers was made. It is necessary to change the heart of the opponent to do so in a Satyagraha campaign as was done in the case of Mill owners in this struggle.

The technique of Satyagraha can be used not only by the worker but also by the farmer. In the Bombay Presidency the farmers of the Kheda District used it very successfully in 1918. Primarily the causes were economic but there were political reasons also. The tussle was between the farmers on the one hand and the Government on the other. The farmers did not want to pay the land revenue to the Government at least for a year due to their bad economic condition. In that area there prevailed famine conditions at that time due to scanty rain fall. It is well known that agriculture has been a gamble in the rains in India. The peasants were sure of their meagre income and hence they requested the authorities to take a lenient view of the whole situation and relax the taxation measures. It was a justified demand because the lands were dry with practically no production. But the authorities sitting tight in the seat of administration were quite stiff in their attitude and would not show any leniency. "The peasant petitions were returned because they had not been sent 'through the proper channel', Interviews with district officers brought no relief and when an influential deputation waited on the Governor of Bombay, he did not see any ground for intervention in a matter which was well within the competence of local officials." 348

The local leaders failed to bring the authorities round and hence they requested Gandhi to help them in their hour of ordeal.

Gandhi at that time was associated actively with a civic organisation in Gujarat known as the Gujarat Sabha. He wrote letters to the Government regarding this situation but that was without any results. The commissioner of that province flung insults at him and on several occasions threatened him also. All these efforts failed and now the only course open to them was non-violent direct action. The only way out was to refuse to pay taxes and face the stiff suppressive policy of the Government in a non-violent manner. "This was the first real agrarian Satyagraha which Gandhi organized in India. The basic problem was to rid the peasantry of fear: the fear of officials, the fear of forfeiture of land and property."<sup>349</sup> The farmers began to boycott the tax and the Government also came forward with a policy to crush the movement. The concerned officers took charge of the cattle of the farmers and realized their tax from the sale proceeds of these. The satyagrahis began to be beaten up and suppressed mercilessly. But the peasants were firm in their positions.

The Government was following a policy of blood and iron and the news about it spread like wild fire in the regions in the vicinity and the people in the nearby districts began to send aid to the struggling farmers. The Government became conscious of the possibility of this struggle spreading to other regions in the neighbourhood. Ultimately the Government had to bend and be lenient. It suspended

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349. B.R. Nanda, Mahatma Gandhi A Biography, p.166.



the realization of the tax from the farmers for that particular year. The objective of the farmers was achieved without any show of violence and hateful and forceful opposition. No violence was shown by the farmers. "The Kheda campaign was brought to a close by an ungracious Government retreat. Without making any public announcement or even informing Gandhi, who heard indirectly, the Chief Collector instructed his staff to drop their demands against the poorer peasants, and insist on payment only from those who could evidently afford it. Most observers hailed it as a victory. Yet it was a feeble end, without that sense of turning over a new leaf which Truth Force was supposed to bring. Gandhi's main source of satisfaction was that established politicians and other educated people had come out to join him among the masses." 350

Again it was employed with success by the farmers of the District of Bardoli in the then Bombay Presidency. The tussle was between a group of farmers and the Government of Bombay. The Government had increased the rate of land revenue and the farmers felt that it was unjust. The Government as a matter of fact, had ordered a 22% increase in the land tax but when it was implemented some farmers had to give even 60% more than what they were previously giving. The argument of the farmers was that their incomes had not increased and hence the increase in land tax was something which was highly unjustified and uncalled for. The Bombay Legislative Council had already raised an objection to such an increase in the land tax. The farmers requested the Government to appoint an impartial committee to

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350. Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi A Study In Revolution*, p.172.  
(Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968)

look into their grievances. The Government did not bother about such a request, rather it continued its policy of realising higher taxes from the peasants. The farmers were frustrated due to this policy of the Government and they planned to offer Satyagraha. Gandhi was busy otherwise. So one of his ablest lieutenants, Vallabhbhai Patel was chosen as a leader for this struggle. Gandhi's blessings were there with the people and he kept a close eye on the subsequent developments in this direction.

First of all, appeals were made to the Government but they failed. Then Vallabhbhai Patel on behalf of the farmers told the Government finally of their intention to resort to non-violent Satyagraha. The Government did not pay any heed to this. After this Vallabhbhai Patel began the work of disciplining the farmers in the cult of Satyagraha. In the District for the purposes of social and educational reform there were already four Gandhi Ashramas where disciplined and trained volunteers were available. Additional camps were planned to be arranged at important points. Arrangements for elaborate publicity for the movement were made in the town of Bardoli itself. An arrangement was made to publish Vallabhbhai Patel's speeches in the form of a news bulletin regularly. There was also an arrangement to distribute these among the farmers of the District. At one stage its circulation reached 14000 copies out of which about 4000 were finding their way to other Districts. The press of the country also gave wide publicity to the speeches of Patel.

Some talented people of that locality composed songs to arouse the enthusiasm of the farmers. Important characteristics and features of non-violence were incorporated in the poems and were given publicity through music. Some volunteers would travel in bullock carts from

village to village and sing the songs of Satyagraha in public congregations. Apart from the expert element, trained in the non-violent technique and coming from the Gandhi Ashramas, the farmers made efforts to train their own men in this field. About 200 men were appointed to supervise the course of the movement and inform the headquarters of the developments regularly. They were to stick to non-violence in the strictest sense. The volunteers met the farmers personally to get their signatures on the Satyagraha pledge which was a vow to continue the struggle till the very end following the path of non-violence. Volunteers became very active in maintaining the proper atmosphere and publishing the developments frequently. After laying the foundations of the non-violent struggle Patel called upon the farmers to begin Satyagraha. The peasants under this scheme refused to pay the taxes to the Government until a reasonable settlement in this direction was made. They also pressed for the resignation of as many tax collectors (Mukhis) as possible.

The Government was ready with the policy of repression. It tried to flatter and bribe a few satyagrahis but without any result. Then it began to favour one satyagrahi committee against the other, again without any significant results. The volunteers and the farmers manifested the highest discipline during the course of this struggle. The Government, having failed in its crooked tactics, began to follow a suppressive policy. The volunteers and farmers began to be heavily fined and imprisoned. Some of them were flogged publicly and dragged like animals in the streets. The satyagrahis tolerated it all and did not react violently. When one group of satyagrahis was arrested, a fresh group would replace it and soon the Government jails were full with no room for the newly arrested persons. After

this the property of the farmers began to be captured by the Government. Their household goods were sold. Their cattle were sold and sent to the slaughter houses. All the land belonging to the farmers was taken away and more than 14,000 acres was sold through auction.

The people being morally sympathetic towards the satyagrahis, it was difficult to find out the purchasers. Many people had lost all their land and personal belongings and other pieces of property. The suppressive policy of the Government was so stern that it was becoming impossible to tolerate it any more. Seeing this, Patel adopted another technique in Satyagraha and this was Hijrat i.e. the people should leave the place in vast numbers. When the farmers did so, the Government found itself in a plight indeed because when many people had migrated to the neighbouring state of Baroda there were not many left to be governed by the Government. A wave of social boycott started against the farmers who would not follow this policy and also against the Government officials. The persons who were boycotted found it difficult to lead a normal life with mental balance. The satyagrahis were very generous to them and they would help them in their hour of crises. Some of the people, socially boycotted, finally joined the ranks of the satyagrahis. It was now a difficult job for the Government to maintain law and order. Its administration began to crumble because the efforts of men to collect taxes were rendered futile. There was a division among the higher officials themselves as to the policy to be adopted towards the satyagrahis. The struggle continued for five and a half months after which the Government was forced to grant every demand of the satyagrahis. The Government, "...promised to release all prisoners, return all confiscated land,...

'to cancel the rise in taxes.'" 351

An armed revolution requires a full dress rehearsal and is mostly suited to urban environment and of course not without unmitigated evils of spreading hatred, ill-will and rancour in society. It requires finances and a stream-lined organization for its success. On the other hand the path of Satyagraha is simpler because no rehearsal and funds are required. But in one way it is stiffer and that is where the individual character, his will-power and internal faculties come into full play. Regarding civil disobedience Gandhi wrote that, "...its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against an outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Its areas as well as its scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case." 352 He writes further, "Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well understood principle, must not be capricious, and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it." 353 Though it is simple yet its enactment sometimes is hazardous because it involves rousing the will power and inner force of so many individuals at the same time.

Apart from these this technique has been utilized several times to do away with the inequalities of the caste system. Such an incident took place in the Vycom village in the then state of Travancore. The people of this village were very orthodox and hence

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351. Louis Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, p.256.  
(Harper & Bros. New York, 1950)

352. Young India, I, p.944.

353. Young India, I, p.57.

the traditional struggle, customary in the South India of those days, between the Brahmins and Non-Brahmins continued unabated. The Brahmins were giving a very miserable treatment to the untouchables and hence the struggle assumed gigantic proportions and required prompt action. The problem mainly concerned the civic rights of the untouchables. One road passing through Vycom and leading to the locality of the high caste touched the locality of the untouchables at one place. In the vicinity was also a temple frequented by the Brahmins for their worship. The Brahmins were fearful of getting polluted and in the process of polluting the Gods and hence prohibited the untouchables from taking this road. Habits and traditions die hard and due to the force of historical background of such a custom and tradition for long, the untouchables also did not find any injustice in the approach of the higher caste brahmins.

Some of the leaders felt strongly against this sort of behaviour of the socially highly placed people and raised their voice against such measures and policies. They wanted to test their strength on this issue. They requested Gandhi to guide them in their efforts so that the backward classes, suppressed throughout the past centuries could be benefitted in the whole country. Gandhi has written about the law of Varna. Gandhi has dealt with the mission of man on this earth. "Varnashramadharma defines man's mission on this earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker." 354

Gandhi was really very sick at

this time and hence he could not take the responsibilities of guidance in his own hands but instead agreed to guide it from a distance. He gave full instructions to the members of the delegation.

The first step taken by these reformers was to walk side by side with the untouchables on this road. These reformers belonged to the higher castes. The reformers would walk down the street followed closely by the untouchables. They walked by the side of the residence of the persons of higher caste and stopped in front of the temple. The Brahmins who were orthodox in their temperament thought it to be a great affront and could not tolerate it. They resorted to a violent attack on the persons thus walking, charged them for trespassing, gave a thorough beating to some of them and handed over others to the police. Different terms of imprisonment were passed against them. The satyagrahis had been fully instructed and guided by Gandhi. So when they were violently attacked, they did not return violence for violence and tolerated the policy of highhandedness of the other party very calmly. They had fully understood the meaning of sacrificial suffering also and when a trial was held, they pleaded guilty.

The people in the vicinity and in the far off regions came to know of this incident and after it their indignation further increased. When reformers were arrested, fresh groups of volunteers from other regions began to pour in to fill up the gap of the arrested persons. The police of the local Maharajah stopped all arrests but got the instructions to stop all the reformers from walking in the road, involved. The satyagrahis were always in touch with Gandhi and showed a resolute peaceful resistance to the policy of suppression. They would face the police non-violently. Some column or the other of the

people was always facing the police with the result that the police had also to arrange the duty of its members on the shift basis for the purposes of patrolling. Gandhi expected them to help the police also, if there was a need. Gandhi was tackling this problem on the plane of morality which was under test both in the case of the police and the brahmins. The satyagrahis were undaunted even when there was heavy rainfall. The orthodox brahmins requested the satyagrahis not to forget and overlook the established traditions. They even gave them clothes and food but the satyagrahis would not budge an inch unless the untouchables were given their right of walking on that road. Finally, the Brahmins were ready to receive the untouchables who were given their civic rights. The cause of social reform thus was advanced throughout the country.

Satyagraha was used also in the princely states. Gradually such a movement spread there. After the general elections of July, 1937, the Congress got majority in six out of eleven British Governors' Provinces. Apart from this about 2/5 of India was under hereditary kings, consisting of about 1/4 of the total population of India. Normally in the princely states there was stiff administration and the efforts of the people for a democratic and liberal Government went unheeded. When an All India Federation was recommended by the Government of India Act of 1935, the people in the states also began to take the support of non-violent direct action. The Congress Governments in most of the British Governors' Provinces came forward with ready help to them. Sometime in the middle of the year 1938 a satyagrahi campaign was launched in the state of Mysore.



The magisterial order was there to ban the hoisting of the flag of the Indian National Congress. Even then some people tried to unfurl it and thus when they insisted upon hoisting it, the police opened fire. Normally such an action on the part of the police could have crushed the movement but instead of that it gave added impetus to it. Sardar Patel was invited by the State Government as well as the people to act as arbitrator in the issue. When Sardar Patel intervened the people's cause was upheld as right and they were victorious. The Congress organization in the State was legalized and was permitted to continue its propaganda for a democratic structure in the State. They could now make use of their nationalist flag in the meetings. Soon after on the same issues there was a Satyagraha in the Travancore State and the results were also similar.

Then followed a Satyagraha in Udaipur in the province of Rajputana. There the people of Nathdwara were agitating for a Government which should be representative. The Rana's Government was quite tough and an order was given to open fire on the persons participating in the agitation. The chief of the police disobeyed the Rana's order and did not shoot at the agitators. For this disregard of the Government he was imprisoned. Several hundred soldiers were sent to suppress the movement of the strikers but they were not able to bring it under control even during a period of three months. There were such movements in Alwar, Dhankamal, Jaiour and even Hyderabad. These movements shook the princely dynasties to their very roots. Now the Princes became conscious of one fact that it was a methodical and systematic approach on the part of the people to do away with the system in the states. They began to plan a common action and in some cases even a common police force to suppress

the people's movements. But finally they became considerate towards the demands of the people.

But by far the most important campaign in this direction for a representative Government in a princely state, was launched in the State of Rajkot in Gujarat. When other rulers were trying to join hands to suppress the movement of the people, the leaders gave a call to specially deal with Rajkot and then the whole nation's concentration was there. It was a small state but it was chosen because it had the impact of the personality of Gandhi. It was here that Gandhi had passed his early days when he received his school education upto the High School standard. It was here again that Gandhi's father had served as the prime minister for many years. The struggle at Rajkot was to be a test case for the whole nation. It was a long-standing tussle between the people and the ruler of this state. The state-police was resorting to very violent acts, beating up the satyagrahis and shooting also some of them. The non-violent resisters would not react at all and they would receive the baton-charge willingly in a pleasant mood.

On November 8, 1938 a procession of peaceful satyagrahis was going towards the Palace but it was stopped by the Police which asked them to disperse also. The processionists did not obey this order and instead preferred to sit down there. The police thereafter used bamboo sticks to beat up the satyagrahis. Women were also not spared. Some men cordoned off the women and formed a sort of protective circular wall round them. The non-violent satyagrahis were thrown on the ground by the merciless beating of the police but a fresh batch of satyagrahis would come and occupy their place. When this happened

the police stopped its beating and moved away from there. The police inspector was so much moved by the non-violent action of the satyagrahis that he tendered his resignation. The struggle continued for about three months after which the ruler invited Sardar Patel on December 26, 1938 for talks. Before Patel went to see the Ruler, the English Prime Minister of the ruler had been turned out. The ruler agreed to introduce popular reforms and also to appoint a committee of ten members, consisting of three of his nominees and seven suggested by Sardar Patel. It was appreciated throughout India.

The rulers of other states were following the developments in Rajkot very closely and certainly were not happy about these as they would act as a prelude to the sounding of their own death knell. The British resident in the Western part of India was also not happy about the developments and hence prompted by this prevailing atmosphere the Thakore of Rajkot went back on his words and again the struggle started. Sardar Patel's suggestion of seven members was also turned down by the Thakore. On the 2nd February 1939 Mrs. Gandhi courted arrest and then began the Civil Disobedience movement with great tempo. Farmers from the villages in the vicinity began to march to the town of Rajkot and court arrest. The ruler at this time was helped by the British authorities also in his act of suppression. There were orders to mix some sort of poison with the food to be given to the satyagrahis in the jails and on it a jail superintendent offered to resign from his post.

The imprisoned satyagrahis resorted to a hunger-strike in the jail itself as a mark of protest against the sub-human treatment given to them. The satyagrahis said that the British Resident had imprisoned

the ruler virtually. After it Gandhi announced that now the struggle was between the people and the British Government. Gandhi wrote a letter to the Thakore who was 31 years old at that time and called him his son. Then Gandhi went to Rajkot and implemented his policy of personal contact with the party in opposition. There he found that the mother of the Thakore opposed her son's policy of suppression. But the Thakore refused to be convinced by the arguments of Gandhi who then thought of resorting to the measures of self-purification whose best form is a fast. Gandhi from the very beginning had great faith in fasts which, while uplifting the moral stature of the person involved, certainly affect other individuals concerned also. Gandhi started his fast unto death on March 3, 1939. "In March, 1939, Gandhi undertook a fast unto death on behalf of the civil liberties of the people of Rajkot...The doctors sought to dissuade the Mahatma... But it was a Gandhian principle to subordinate the flesh to the spirit. When moral considerations made an act imperative, the body had no veto. If the flesh was weak it suffered or even died; it could not say no." 355

This created great impact on the whole of India. India was as a matter of fact on the eve of a major national crisis. Linlithgow, the Viceroy was approached by some to intervene in this matter lest it be too late. In Bombay there was the Congress ministry which announced that it would resign if something was not done immediately. Gandhi had become so much prominent by then that the Government was not ready to risk his life. The crisis in the

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355. Louis Fischer, The Life Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.343.  
(Harper Brothers, New York, 1950)

states was due to the fact that the rulers were not changing with the changed times and were not ready to concede the demands, however genuine, of the people. The nationalist forces began to denounce the dictatorial pattern of regimes in the states especially after the idea of federation of the British Provinces and the Indian States was given publicity. The nationalist forces opposed this scheme of Federation due to a strange situation which it would create in bringing together the nominees of the autocratic rulers with the popularly elected representatives of the people in the central legislature. The nationalist forces of the country were fearful of a reactionary solid block of the imperialists from Britain and representatives of autocratic princely states of India.

There were two ways open to the nationalists either, to force the British Government to amend the constitution in a way in which the rulers would not send nominees to the federation but the subjects would elect their representatives who would represent their case in the federal Government or, the nationalist forces could create such a situation in the states in which it would become impossible for the rulers to disregard the popular sentiments. The Congress concentrated its attention on the second alternative in Rajkot without, of course, giving up its efforts in the first field. Gandhi's fast brought the desired results when the ruler there became lenient in his approach. With this example before them some states like Junagarh and Aundh granted concessions to the people in the form of representative Governments there. Similarly Satyagraha succeeded in other groups. The Akalis were given the right to carry Kirpan by their non-violent direct action of 1922. The Finns were oppressed by Russia and they campaigned in a non-violent manner against it from 1901 to 1905 and

were successful. The Quakers in England successfully launched a campaign against military recruitment and thus by the Draft Act of 1916 the "Conscientious objectors" were exempted from military service.

There is another field in which Satyagraha is applied in the national life. In such a case the whole community, the whole society seethes with discontent due to certain traditions which have been established by the administration for its own welfare, very much unaware of the needs of the people. Gandhi was against exploitation in society like Tolstoy. In such a case the main issue is to change the very content and structure of the existing administration and finally to replace it with the Government in which people's representatives sit. Gandhi wrote about swaraj by non-violent means that it, "...can...never mean an interval of chaos and anarchy. Swaraj by non-violence must be a progressively peaceful revolution...."<sup>356</sup> Throughout the past records of history there have been evidences when a community rose against the state for its rights which were crushed in an unjust fashion. On very many occasions such uprisings have been bloody and have left a trail of heinous acts of violence. The history of revolutions tells us that violent overthrow of the Government has been the basic belief of the revolutionaries from the days of the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution. It is also on record that violent deeds had a tendency to continue unabated even after the purpose of the revolution was served. Revolutions have been enveloped in a bloody atmosphere indeed.

Gandhian techniques provide a unique example of non-violence. The fundamental belief of Gandhi was that a revolution can take place without recourse to violence, that the unjust established order of things can be changed peacefully and in non-violent manner. Gandhi wrote, "It is the acid test of non-violence that, in a non-violent conflict, there is no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends. That was my experience in South Africa, with General Dutoits. He started with being my bitterest opponent and critic. Today he is my warmest friend."<sup>357</sup> After all in the Gandhi era, Gandhi led the Indians against the mighty British imperialism in a highly non-violent fashion. The experiment of Satyagraha and non-violence was carried out on a national plane. It will not be too much to say that it had a tendency to assume an international character because the resources of the entire Empire were sought to be utilized to suppress the sentiments of the whole Indian nation.

The use of Satyagraha on the national level began with the non-cooperation Movement of 1920 which lasted upto 1922 after which it had to be suspended. Gandhi believed that Civil Disobedience is to be handled with care for, "by its very nature, non-cooperation is even open to children of understanding and can be safely practised by the masses. Civil Disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can therefore be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate."<sup>358</sup> Then there was a brief period in the history of the Indian national movement when the hopes cherished were high,

357. Harizan, November 12, 1938, p.327.

358. Young India, I, pp.222-23.

but people were feeling miserable and despondent because of a sudden brake, applied by Gandhi merely due to a stray incident of violence on the part of the people at Chauri-Chaura. There were occasional individual efforts at Satyagraha but again the nation was awakened with the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 when it was associated with the breaking of the salt law and Gandhi's march to Dandi. The 'Quit India Movement' of August 1942 was another effective example of the employment of this unique technique on the national level.

The non-cooperation Movement of 1920 began as a reaction to the suppressive policy of the British. Gandhi gave a call of non-cooperation in 1920 after the Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy and lack of assurance of any concessions to the Indians on the part of the British Government. Before that he was a cooperator. He helped the British war effort with men and money. After all he had become famous due to his successful struggle in South Africa. He had appealed to the people to help the British Government in their hour of crisis. People readily came forward. It is doubtful whether Gandhi followed his policy of non-violence by so doing. It is a fact that it sounds like opportunism. India very sincerely hoped for the victory of the Allied Powers because in that event she could get Dominion status. When the war came to an end, India did not get what was promised to her. Due to this there was frustration and dissatisfaction in the whole country.

Indians were not given commissions in the Army and there was a lot of discrimination towards them as compared to the Europeans. There were conditions of unemployment. The mill-owners began to give lesser wages to the labourers. The working-class, thus, was further



dissatisfied. There was conscription in parts of northern India like the Punjab and hence the people there were anti-British. At the same time the Rowlatt Committee Report was out. The committee had been appointed to find out if special action was necessary to tide over the revolutionary spirit in the country. It recommended very stern measures. It suggested that people should not be allowed to assemble in large numbers. Freedom of speech and assembly and press was to be greatly restricted and in some cases totally denied. People could be imprisoned without a proper trial. People were surprised at the Government's attitude. When the report reached Gandhi, he was much hurt because he felt that it was due to him alone that Indians had come forward to help the British Government.

Gandhi was already very weak at that time because he had overstrained himself on behalf of the British Government. He felt guilty of not having been able to understand the British game. He opposed the Rowlatt Bills in public but the Government gave the sanction of law to them. There was no other alternative now but the path of Satyagraha. *Wartal* was offered as a mark of protest. Under this the villages and towns would stop all activity and the adult population was to go on fast for twenty four hours. Big meetings were held to oppose the Rowlatt Act. People were asked to take a vow to offer Satyagraha and disobey the Act. Slogans were shouted and processions taken out in the important towns in India. The Government adopted repressive measures and resorted to firing at Calcutta, Delhi and Amritsar. There was much trouble in the Punjab and hence Gandhi thought to go there on a mission of peace. But the Government did not allow him to go there. He was arrested on the way and taken to Bombay.

The people in Amritsar did not sit quiet either. They began to oppose the Government measures vehemently. Their two leaders, Dr. Satyapal and Kitchlew were arrested. Then they thought of holding a meeting at Jallianwalla Bagh on the 13th April 1919 to peacefully register their sense of opposition to the Government policies. Innocent men and women were fired upon by machine-guns by the soldiers. Thousands were dead and wounded after this. India was taken aback by this incident. People began to find out ways and means to oppose the Governmental measures under the leadership of Gandhi. Gandhi suggested that serious protest and opposition should be done against the Government policies. He also advised people to hold mass protest meetings. The Government buildings were to be picketed by women. The Government came forward with a very suppressive policy of beating up the people and bringing about a massacre of innocent men and women. Then Gandhi gave a call for non-cooperation under which the people were not to give their support to the Government titles were to be surrendered, the rich were not supposed to take loans from the Government and the poor not to serve the Government.

Lawyers gave up their lucrative practice, Government schools were boycotted. The elected representatives of the people in the legislative councils refused to sit there as they were busy in the country with the preaching of the message of non-violence. The British goods were boycotted and the people began to patronize local Indian products. Indians holding good Government jobs were asked to resign because the leaders wanted to bring the administration to a complete stand still. Due to this programme for some time at least the Governmental administration was shaken to its very roots. The aim was also to strike at the existing order of things in

administration. This was supposed to be done by not paying the taxes and resorting to Civil Disobedience to oppressive Governmental laws. The Government had imposed a ban on the national literature but nobody cared for it.

The spirit of the Rowlatt Act was crushed completely. The Government followed suppressive policy and frequent flogging of the people was resorted to. People were also in a few cases violent. "Gandhi was doubtless greatly shocked by the unexpected turn events had taken and admitted that he had made 'a blunder of Himalayan dimensions which had enabled ill-disposed persons, not true passive resisters at all, to perpetuate disorders,' and while declaring his readiness to assist in every possible way to restore normal conditions, he announced the suspension of Passive Resistance."<sup>359</sup> But a completely non-violent struggle was an impossibility and despite too much preaching of non-violence and lack of hatred violence was there at several places. In Viramgam and Ahmedabad there were riots. At Chauri-Chaura there was much violence. Gandhi, as usual, was pained deeply and thought that as yet a proper atmosphere for non-violence was not there. So he decided to suspend it. It was suspended despite much opposition by the people and other leaders at this time. People began to criticize his ideals.

Gandhi was arrested on March 18, 1922. He was charged with arousing the sentiments of the people to resort to violence. Gandhi pleaded guilty and said, "The only course open to you, the judge... is either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty

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359. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, The History Of The Indian National Congress, Vol.I, p.171.  
(Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946)

if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people." 360 Gandhi was sentenced to six years rigorous imprisonment. In 1925 Gandhi expressed his ideas about swara, where he was not against elections and representation. He wrote, "By swaraj I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the vote of the largest number of adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the state and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters." 361 He writes further that the central power will be based on, "universal suffrage exercised by a disciplined and politically intelligent electorate." 362 Though this experiment on a national level failed yet it served the purpose of arousing the consciousness of the people. Certainly it prepared the background for another movement to begin in 1930. Gandhi wrote in 1930, "The plan of Civil Disobedience has been conceived to neutralize and ultimately entirely to displace violence and enthrone non-violence in its stead, to replace hatred by love, to replace strife by concord." 363

During the intervening period between 1922 and 1930, on the one hand people became sceptical about the future of the movement for Swaraj in India, on the other the British administration came upon the people with a tough hand of suppression. People began to seriously doubt the utility of Satyagraha. The dynamic element in the society

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360. Krishnadas, Seven Months With Mahatma Gandhi, p.265. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951 - I Edition, Abridged)
361. Young India, II, pp.488-89.
362. Harijan, October 13, 1940, p.320.
363. Young India, March 27, 1930, p.109.

was not at all ready to recognize it as an effective measure. The technique of Satyagraha began to appear full of loop holes. Gandhi was sure of the efficacy of this movement and he ascribed the failure to the lack of preparation on the part of the people. When he was released, he quietly retired to his Ashram. The All India Trade Union Congress was inspiring the working men. In Russia a communist form of Government was already in existence and hence there was serious doubt in the minds of the people about such an ideology based upon peace and non-violence. The labourers round about 1929, were becoming class-conscious, realizing for the first time their inferior position. Side by side the tempo of Satyagraha was rising especially in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The success of Satyagraha at Bardoli in 1928 had raised the hopes of the people in favour of Satyagraha. The boycott of the Simon Commission kept up the national enthusiasm and different disgruntled elements began to rush towards the Congress fold. At the same time there was the mushroom growth of the youth leadership in the country which demanded a dynamic approach of opposition to the British Government. They were in a challenging mood. In this atmosphere Gandhi realized that it was a suitable occasion for direct action against the British. The Congress was clamouring for strong and popular leaders who could inspire the people as well as the workers. The Congress had demanded Dominion status at Calcutta but it was refused. So at the Lahore Session it passed a resolution demanding complete independence. It was the symbol of the rising tide of nationalism. The nation was getting restive now. The goal of complete independence was really a great objective and to achieve it the Congress sanctioned Civil Disobedience. A hierarchical list of Indian

leadership was prepared so that after the arrest of one leader another could take his place. People were waiting for the direction from Gandhi.

March 12, 1930 was fixed as the date for the beginning of the Civil Disobedience movement. Gandhi believed that, "even the most despotic Government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone." 364

On March 2, Gandhi had written to the Viceroy about his plan and demanded an answer from the Government. Side by side the people were asked to be ready for any eventuality. The Viceroy's answer could not satisfy them. Then Gandhi, accompanied by a few lieutenants of his, marched towards Dandi to break the restriction imposed upon manufacturing salt. Thereafter the whole nation reacted and began to oppose and break the Governmental measures and laws. Various tactics were used by the satyagrahis during this movement. In the towns there were orders against processions. They were freely challenged. There was a ban on meetings but these were held in towns as well as the villages. Gandhi was beginning to believe the inevitability of revolution but, "the only thing that the Mahatma felt he could do was, to prevent it from becoming a butchery, by placing himself at the head of the revolution and making it a "non-violent" one of Satyagraha." 365

British goods were boycotted and women resorted to intense picketing at the gates of banks, insurance companies, mints etc. The

364. Young India, I, p.205.

365. Zacharias, Renascent India, p.261.  
(George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1933)

workers were issuing their own pamphlets without the help of the press about the progress of the movement and the Government policy of repression. The distribution of the leaflets was illegal but that was freely done. Announcements were written on the side walks or the walls etc. When the tempo of the movement increased, there was a call for the boycott of post and telegraph systems, Tramways and shipping companies. The Union Jack was not shown any respect and attempts were made to hoist the national flag on public buildings. Peaceful efforts to reoccupy the offices of the Congress under police control, were made. The main point of concentration during this movement was disobeying the bad laws in a civilized fashion - or Civil Disobedience. The salt Act was the main Act to be opposed because it affected the economic standards of the common man. The liquor and opium shops were picketed and the farmers were exhorted not to pay the land revenue.

The Government was ready to meet the situation. All the important leaders were thrown behind the bars. The offices of the Congress were declared illegal and occupied by the Government. The jails were full to capacity with satyagrahis. The police resorted to merciless beating of the innocent men and women, taking out processions. Firing was also resorted to. The property of the satyagrahis was confiscated. Thousands of persons, men and women suffered at the hands of the British Government under the cruel laws. Despite inhuman violence from the side of the administration people showed a remarkable degree of tolerance and non-violence. This movement continued for about a year after which the Government was in a mood to negotiate with the Congress leaders. Gandhi along with the members of the Congress Working Committee was released. There was a pact signed between Irwin and Gandhi on March 5, 1931. Gandhi was given an

invitation to attend the Round Table Conferences in London.

Gandhi went to attend the 2nd Round Table Conference but the Government went back on its promises and was in no mood to respect the terms of the pact. Gandhi on his return to India again started the Satyagraha movement which was over in 1934. It cannot be called a complete success. It was only partially so. India after this Civil Disobedience Movement became fresh and felt self-confident and strengthened. The success came in the form of Gandhi-Irwin Pact though the Government broke its promise later on. It is a fact that when Gandhi analysed his past Civil Disobedience campaigns, he found that the people were not easily influenced by his policy of non-violence and also some people were not happy at the restrictions imposed by the Satyagraha movement. So it was not easy to create a proper background for Satyagraha. But the dissatisfaction of the people continued to increase and the Government of India Act of 1935 also did not seem to be the answer.

He thought that the pattern of the future non-violent state could not be determined. He wrote, "I have purposefully refrained from dealing with the nature of Government in a society based deliberately on non-violence...When society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the Government based wholly on non-violence will be like."<sup>366</sup> Gandhi had devoted his whole life to the cause of non-violence and to win over 'brute force' through the force of the soul.

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366. Harlian, February 11, 1939, p.8.



Gandhi said about non-violence that, "it is a profound error to suppose that, whilst the law is good enough for individuals, it is not for masses of mankind."<sup>367</sup> He was much surprised when the Congress ministries also after the elections of 1937 would send for the police to suppress the communal riots. He wanted the Congress to organize itself into peace brigades.

Gandhi wrote, "...whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence the last hope of the world will be gone...."<sup>368</sup> While writing about Swaraj Gandhi believed, "...Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day."<sup>369</sup> Gandhi was much pained when the two-nation theory was accepted by the All India Muslim League in March 1940. He never wanted to see any differences between the Muslim and the Hindu Community. He was against the division of India but he would not force his opinion upon any individual. He said, "I know, no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful the majority the rest may present. The Muslims must have the same rights of self determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division."<sup>370</sup>

367. Harlian, September 5, 1936, p.237.

368. Ronald Duncan, Selected Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, pp.97-98.

369. Harlian, March 25, 1939, p.65.

370. B.R. Wanda, Mahatma Gandhi A Biography, p.411.

Then another experiment of Satyagraha was during the Quit India Movement of August 1942. " 'British Rule in India must end immediately,' the Congress Working Committee declared after a meeting at Wardha on July 14, 1942."<sup>371</sup> The All India Congress Committee at its Bombay Meeting on August 7, 1942 passed the Quit India resolution. The assembled delegates were addressed by Gandhi just after mid-night wherein he told them that first of all he would approach the Viceroy and request him to accept the demands of the Congress. This could take about two to three weeks' time. In the meantime he advised the delegates to work on the spinning wheel but he advised everyone to feel free from that very moment and also that he was not under British imperialism. All the important leaders including Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad and others were arrested on August 9, 1942. People in provinces like U.P., Bihar, Bengal and Bombay were very furious and began to set fire to the post offices and police stations etc. Damage began to be done to the Railway lines, telegraphic lines etc. Gandhi had been very clear in his speech to the assembled delegates that they should follow the path of non-violence but it was not paid much attention to due to the suppressive policy, followed by the Government, and the lack of leaders to guide them. Violence was resorted to by the people who began to be fired upon by the Government forces which sometimes opened even machine-gun fire.

The Government began to blame the Congress party for having initiated a violent revolution in a planned manner. Perhaps it went into different directions due to the absence of the leaders on the political scene at this time. But this is a fact that Gandhi had

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371. B.R. Nanda, Mahatma Gandhi A Biography, p.461.

infused a unique spirit among the masses. Satyagraha might not have come to his idealistic expectations yet it is a fact that the British Government was always in a fix whether to tolerate it or suppress it, for, "it is not possible for a modern state based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder whether external or internal."<sup>372</sup> If the British Government tolerated it, it would advance with greater speed and if it suppressed it, it would evoke sympathetic feelings of the people in India and abroad. This was a very great contribution of Satyagraha to the freedom struggle. Regarding the use of non-violence by the masses Gandhi said, "unfortunately for us, we are strangers to the non-violence of the brave on a mass scale. Some even doubt the possibility of the exercise of non-violence by groups much less by masses of people. They restrict its exercise to exceptional individuals. Only mankind can have no use of it, if it is always reserved only for individuals."<sup>373</sup>

There were many factors, of course, for the Government of Attlee to consider the case of transfer of power to Indian hands but there was an idealistic overtone in Attlee's policy in 1946-47 and it was due to this that the British Government was taking a fresh initiative in the relationship between India and Britain. Gandhi had always pleaded for a change of relationship for the last thirty years and now that this change was very much in the air, it was a success of Gandhi's struggle of Satyagraha which was itself idealistic. Gandhi remarked in 1946 that "a non-violent revolution is not a programme of 'Seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of

372. Harlian, May 12, 1946, p.128.

373. Harlian, September 8, 1946, p.296.

relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power." 374 On the eve of the creation of Pakistan the Muslim League had observed August 16, 1946 as the Direct Action Day with the consequent occurrence of communal riots in the Punjab and Bengal and other parts of India. Calcutta was experiencing a terrible blood-bath but the condition in East Bengal was worse. Truth, love and Ahimsa which were the basic tenets of Gandhi's movements and preachings were flung to the air and there was an atmosphere of mutual suspicion enveloped with violent deeds.

To test his principles Gandhi went to Srirampur, a village in East Bengal (Noakhali District). The Hindu families were very nervous. He worked there zealously and met the Muslims. His presence brought back self-confidence among the people. He went from village to village infusing self-confidence and courage among the people. Gandhi was a bit critical of his policy of non-violence when the whole of North India became a communal inferno but it is certain that the idealistic perfection of this policy could not be implemented because the people were not sufficiently trained in it and then Gandhi's lone personality was the most dominating factor. It was a good commentary upon his philosophy and work that if violence was not totally eradicated during the Satyagraha campaigns, it was definitely much reduced and here lies the success of non-violence. No doubt democracy diminishes the need for Civil resistance. Gandhi wrote in 1947, "Satyagraha, Civil Disobedience and fasts ... had restricted use in democracy. They could not even think of them whilst the Governments were settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another" 375

374. Harijan, February 17, 1946, p.14.

375. Harijan, September 7, 1947, p.316.

Of course, he was always very sorry for the plight of millions of refugees, rendered homeless during the riots. When the Hindus and Sikhs from Punjab came to Delhi, they had their eyes fixed on Muslim shops and houses. They thought that the Muslims would be thrown out of their places and sent to Pakistan. Gandhi due to this situation was very sorry because his ideal, 'forgive and forget' could not be implemented but here it should be mentioned that at least there was an effort at bringing about a friendly atmosphere and that lessened tensions. He made certain concessions also when he did not mind the use of troops for particular situations. "When Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union, he did not object to the despatch of Indian Troops...." 376

Finally Gandhi attached great importance to non-violence in the freedom movement of India because without it, it would go in the channels of hatred and violence which, in their effort to solve problems, create fresh problems and these are more complicated than the original ones. At least Gandhi guided the people to follow non-violence due to which the violence adopted by them in stray cases could not be boundless and then there was the atmosphere of friendship and not bitterness left when the movement was over. It is a fact that no state has so far done the work of training its citizens in non-violence for "a state which would train and discipline its citizens in the science and art of Satyagraha is yet to be born." 377

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376. Bishan Sarup Sharma, Gandhi As A Political Thinker, p.114.  
(Indian Press, Allahabad, 1956)

377. Ted Dunn, ed., A Search For Alternatives To War And Violence,  
p.191.  
(James Clarke & Co., London, 1963)

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ROLE OF NON-VIOLENCE IN INTERNATIONAL FIELD

The modern world is war-torn. If there is a war in the future it will bring about total annihilation of world civilization as it exists today. The people are anxiously waiting for an answer to this state of affairs leading to a very great confusion. Some people cannot tolerate the killing of human beings on the count of religion. In the political field war involves mass killings as is happening today in Vietnam and West Asia. Pacifists avoid war altogether due to which their approach to this problem becomes negative. "If pacifism is ever to become a mass movement, if a whole nation is ever to achieve non-violence and use non-violent resistance instead of war, the movement (i.e. the pacifist movement) must have a common discipline."<sup>378</sup> Further "...the failures and apparent futilities of non-violent resistance in the past have been due, very largely to lack of discipline."<sup>379</sup> Gandhi is positive on this point, because he is not for using non-violence to prevent war but it is to revolutionize the very individual life in its various aspects like the economic, social and home life.

Gandhi wrote, "By reason of life-long practice of ahimsa, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of ahimsa in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence,

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378. Richard B. Gregg, The Power of Non-violence, p.54.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1938)

379. Richard B. Gregg, A Discipline For Non-Violence, p.31.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1941)

whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom-Bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence." 380 Non-violence is to be the daily ritual with an individual and among the nations. An individual is to keep away from exploitation and injustice wherever they exist. A person believing in non-violence cannot have many wants and has to lead a very simple life. Pacifists believe in pronagating against the war while Gandhi believes in uprooting it basically from life. The future will show whether Gandhi's method of total change will be accepted at all because it involves much self-discipline, culture and reduction of wants which seems, if not impossible, at least difficult in the present day materialistic civilization. Radhakrishnan says, "Gandhi tells us that we, who constitute the social order, are the disease and we must change, if civilization is to improve." 381

Truth, love and soul-force are natural in history and that is why they are not noted but history records specially the interruption of the working of this force. When peace is disturbed, different states take up arms and fight. The evolution of mankind denotes that man has been perpetually struggling to attain ahimsa and peace. Gandhi himself said, "I am a man of peace. I believe in peace." 382 From cannibalism came the stage of hunting which gave place to a settled way of life and the stage of agriculture. From the nomadic life, man went on to a civilized and stable form of life, and

380. Harizan, November 16, 1947, p.412.

381. S. Radhakrishnan, Mahatma Gandhi, Essays And Reflections On His Life And Work, Preface.  
(Jaico Publishing House, Bombay, 1956)

382. S.C. Gangal, The Gandhian Way To World Peace, p.VII .  
(Vora & Co., Bombay, 1960)

established towns and villages and became a member of a nation and then his interests were not confined merely to the family. This shows that from violence, the tendency has been to proceed towards non-violence. Though the force of circumstances presents different situations man does not want war but wars do come and it is during a war that mankind begins to desire peace and crave for ahimsa and non-violence.

Nations which believe in non-violence must be ready to sacrifice everything including the last man, excepting honour. Non-violence can not permit the subjugation of other countries which is a feature of present day imperialism which does so by the use of brute force. "The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him...Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend." 383 Non-violence is based upon the fundamentals of love and if it can be practised in individual life, it can be very well done in the relations among nations. It depends upon changing the heart of the opponent or his very tendency to resort to violence. Non-violence fundamentally believes in God while violence in atheism where there is no scope for God. When in the daily life there is no belief in the power of God, then for protection from the various dangers one adopts violence and depends upon the show of physical force. The God-fearing man and a nation devote their time to the pursuit of good deeds and actions only and they certainly refrain from evil deeds. In true non-violence people have to learn the control of mind. In the world society, "based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the

383. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.6.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)



tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated." 384

Non-violence can be best learnt in the family atmosphere and then it can be applied to the international field even. "It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist." 385 A non-violent person takes the whole world to be his family. He will not harbour any feeling of fear towards anybody and others will also behave in the same manner. "The world will live in peace only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so." 386 Of course, this is a fact that there will be only few persons believing in such a non-violence. In non-violence people should understand the basic meaning of this word and if these people are not fully convinced after reading the meaning, they may give it up. If they believe in it, they must realise their duties after accepting it. For success it is necessary to have "... tolerance, patience, humility, love of truth, love of people and faith in the ultimate possibilities of human nature." 387

Non-violence has to be shown at a time when there is disturbance, riot or a war and if most of the people begin to resort to non-violence on such occasions, a full fledged army believing in non-violence comes into existence. If the result of resistance is reduction of the strength of the non-violent army one should not bother. Even the smallest army having a belief in non-violence will

384. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.88.

385. Young India, II, p.1222.

386. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.70.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

387. Richard B. Gregg, A Discipline For Non-Violence, p.20.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1959)

automatically increase in strength with the passage of time. A violent army is useless even if it increases in number. It is not necessary for the believers or participants in the non-violent army to implement this meaning in a perfect manner. An effort, a continuous, ceaseless endeavour in this direction also will entitle them to join its ranks. Perfect non-violence is not possible. "A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."<sup>388</sup>

An army of non-violent persons is different in its nature from a violent army. Its action is there in times of peace as well as of disturbances. Their role is in constructive deeds under which even the idea of a riot or a war is an impossibility. They are always on the lookout of opportunities when different communities come to a clash and if they do so, to bring about an amicable understanding among them. They will propagate peace and will try to come into contact with individual persons—men, women and children. Such an army has always to be on its toes to meet any emergency so that if a few people turn violent sometimes, they are ready to sacrifice their lives in large numbers. These will be the 'spot-less deaths' and they will be sufficient to bring this major confusion to an end. The sacrifice of lives by thousands of persons to quell the mob violence is a cheaper and better device than the heinous violence of the parading armies. People will not reject war easily "...without having a substitute in which they have confidence. To provide the kind of knowledge and understanding about non-violent action which will make an intelligent choice possible for them...a vast programme of research

388. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.91.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

and analysis is desperately needed." 389 There should be Satyagraha brigades in every town and village. The organizers should be personally acquainted with the persons in the brigades. Satyagraha is radically different from the defence provided by the armed forces. In the armed forces the state resorts to the policy of conscription, compulsory recruitment. The persons who can join the Satyagraha brigade must have a knowledge of and belief in non-violence (ahimsa) and Truth (Satya). So the organizers should have a thorough knowledge about the persons in the Satyagraha brigades.

There are certain prerequisites for the members of a peace-brigade:

1. A member of the peace brigade must believe in non-violence. For that a firm faith in God is essential because a non-violent person derives the basic sustenance from his faith in God alone which makes it possible for him to die without any anger, hatred or feeling of revenge. The belief in the omnipresence of God gives one the quality or the faculty of respecting and loving the lives of one's opponents who are otherwise ordinarily considered to be scoundrels or the undesirable elements in the society.
2. The believer in peace cannot proceed further in his path unless he has a mastery of the fundamentals of the different religions of the world. At least he must be aware of the chief tenets of different faiths, that prevail and exist in his country.
3. The men in different localities should do this work of peace there.

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389. Ted Dunn, ed., A Search For Alternatives To War And Violence, p.145. (James Clarke And Co. Ltd., London, 1963)

4. This work of peace can be done in a single handed fashion as well as on the collective plane.
5. This believer in peace will continuously strive for closer contacts with the people of his own locality so that if there is a major disturbance some times, he is not faced with strangers but only those whom he chose to serve once.
6. Character and impartiality are the key notes of a person believing in peace.
7. The peace-brigade should always be watchful of storm centres and trouble-spots and try its level best to create a situation in which the actual trouble does not start at all.
8. During the course of the movement it is good if there are persons who can devote their full time to this activity but even part time workers from different walks of life do the job in a fine manner.
9. Finally the members of the peace brigade should have a uniform of their own, to distinguish them from other persons who are not its members.

In the voluntary corps where force is the basic factor, much emphasis is laid on the physical and muscular development of the body but in the organizations believing in non-violence character is emphasized more than physical strength. For the sake of efficiency the number of persons in a non-violent army must not be large. Equality and mutual knowledge are to be emphasized but in one locality there should be one head to streamline the organization and its activities. When there are more than one brigades, their heads should have mutual consultation among them. All these should have tremendous faith in God due to which one is not tempted to kill other persons.

This will show the right path. Gandhi gave certain rules for the guidance of such a corps and its volunteers. Some of these rules are:

1. No weapons should be carried by a volunteer.
2. There should be some distinguishing mark about a volunteer.
3. Every volunteer must be equipped with such instruments as are necessary for first aid in cases of injury etc.
4. We should be aware of the method to carry away and remove to a safer place the wounded person.
5. He should be aware of the technique to control fire and help persons, enveloped in it.
6. Residents of his locality must be known to such a volunteer.
7. He should be a religious man, remembering the name of the Lord (Ram) always.

Then "a very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like."<sup>390</sup> The non-violent army should have abiding faith in God. There is little experience of non-violence in the sphere of foreign attack i.e. when a country is attacked by another country but Gandhi explained the code of conduct for such an eventuality also. If there is an attack on a country and both the armies are advancing towards each other for violent attack, the non-violent army will place itself in between these two units. Gandhi himself admitted that this could not be the final answer. But he was sure that by this act the violence on the part of the invader would be reduced to the very minimum. The

390. Harilal, May 12, 1946, p.128.

head of the non-violent army will have to show greater presence of mind than is done by the head of a violent army and Gandhi believed that he would be helped by God in different situations. The non-violent army should be ready to carry out the orders of its head faithfully. Obedience of the head should be the main characteristic of the non-violent army. Gandhi quoted the reply of Ram to Vibhishan when the latter was baffled about the procedure which could be adopted by Ram to conquer Rawana. Ram replied to Vibhishan, "The chariot, my dear Vibhishana, that wins the victory for Ram is of a different sort from the usual one. Manliness and courage are its wheels, unflinching truth and character its banners and standards, strength, discrimination, self restraint and benevolence its horses, with forgiveness, mercy, equanimity their reins; prayer to God is that conqueror's unerring charioteer, dispassion his shield, contentment his sword, charity his axe, intellect his spear, and perfect science his stout bow. His pure and unwavering mind stands for a quiver, his mental quietude and his practice of Yama and Niyama stand for the sheaf of arrows, and the homage he pays to Brahmans and his gurus is his impenetrable armour. There is no other equipment for victory comparable to this; and my dear friend, there is no enemy who can conquer the man who takes his stand on the chariot of dharma. He who has a powerful chariot like this is a warrior who can conquer even that great and invincible enemy-the world. Harken unto me and fear not." 391

A society which is non-violent does not live in constant fear of attack but it has the belief that it would not be disturbed by

others. "Mere declaration of non-participation in a violent war is only a negative approach. Gandhi's non-violence implies something positive as well which alone would increase our non-violent strength. It would imply the removal of...socio-economic disparities...The world peace that is envisaged in Panchshila would be a reality only when human society is remodelled to conform to the ideas of universal brother-hood." 392 Even then if a non-violent society is attacked it can follow either of the two ways:

1. It may not come in the way of the aggressor when he is occupying the territory belonging to it but in active life should not give any cooperation to him. People should give no help even if they are killed because it is better than submitting to the evil forces.
2. The second way could be resistance of a non-violent variety to be offered by the people trained in the cult of non-violence.

The aggressor is not without a heart and selfless sacrifice of lives before him might change his very attitude. Even the cruellest person must be converted when thousands of persons sacrifice their lives without resisting violently. In such a case a society has not to spend unnecessarily on armaments. The moral stature of the people trained in non-violence is sufficiently high. Such bravery as will be shown by the non-violent army will have no parallel in the history of violent wars. Here dying rather than killing becomes an act of high chivalry. In a non-violent resistance there is no question of defeat because one is not inimical or hateful basically. Love and not hate, is the supreme law of life though the evolution of mankind has been

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392. Bishan Sarup Sharma, Gandhi As A Political Thinker, p.156.  
(Indian Press Pvt. Ltd., Allahabad, 1956)

sometimes very unfortunately punctuated with violent wars but that was only a crisis in human culture though for a temporary period of time.

If non-violence can be exercised on the national level, certainly it can be used in the international affairs also. When Japan was attacking the eastern fringes of India during the days of the Second World War, Gandhi said that had India been independent, its non-violence would have begun right from the time the Japanese set their feet on the Indian soil. The resisters following the path of non-violence would not have given them even water had they occupied Indian territory by force. If by chance a few Japanese entered the Indian premises by mistake, it was a different situation where help could be given because nobody was an enemy for a non-violent resister. If the aggressor subjugates the non-violent resisters, they should die in the process because finally there will be a limit beyond which even the most *barbarous aggressor* would not like to go. This will be exemplary and the crude aggressor may undergo the very change of mentality and thinking in this way. If the non-violent resisters are ready to be exterminated completely rather than to submit before the military might of the aggressor, the non-violent resisters have won.

Then the question arises as to whether a society which has not got the strength of a mechanical and highly industrialized age, can face the attack of an aggressor who is equipped with the most dangerous modern weapons. Gandhi believes that war begins due to "the spirit of violence."<sup>393</sup> Yes it is possible if this particular

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393. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.163.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)



society in danger is conscious of its honour and self-respect. Such a society knows no defeat even if it is attacked by the thermo-nuclear weapons of the present atomic age. A state has to be non-violent basically in its nature in order to offer non-violent resistance. Non-violent nationalism is not, "exclusive, and is not devised to harm any nation or individual."<sup>394</sup> A state which believes in the theory of force cannot use the technique of non-violence because you cannot believe in God and materialism at the same time. "...the police will be after our pattern, and not the British pattern...If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers."<sup>395</sup> Some people think that if the attacking party comes to know that the opponent is non-violent, the aggressor may feel elated and encouraged but if it is the non-violence of stronger persons, it will not happen. There is no question of non-violent resistance by a nation which is militarily strong. If such a nation wants to follow the path of non-violence first it has to do away with its military might and only then the resistance in a non-violent manner is possible.

Then people following the path of non-violent resistance may in a few cases, be ignorant of the meaning of non-violence but the leaders who lead them have to be acquainted with the whole scheme and its meaning also. Some people may doubt that non-violence can be practised by humanity at large but it is possible only if proper training is given and leadership is there. Gandhi cited the example of Poles in their struggle against Germany and said that it amounted to non-violence. "For the Poles to stand valiantly against the German

394. Young India, March 26, 1931, p.51.

395. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.31.  
(Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)

hordes vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are 400 millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she should constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations." 396

With the increasing military expenditure, the welfare of individuals is impossible. Gandhi wrote, "If we attain Swaraj by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The goondas too will then have come under our control." 397 Gandhi was optimistic about India when he wrote, "India will become a torch-bearer to the oppressed and exploited races, only if she can vindicate the principle of non-violence in her own case, not jettison it as soon as independence of foreign control is achieved." 398 Further he commented, "...time might come when it would be their duty in India to offer non-violent resistance of the purest type for the sake of their brethren...India

396. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.45.

397. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.31.

398. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.13.

was fast becoming the granary of the honour and dignity of the human race." 399 Gandhi posed the question, "Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise ahimsa, sustains this planet of ours." 400

Of course it is difficult to practise non-violence in a world full of mutual animosity and hatred and struggle, yet life does not become worth living without it. The non-violent resisters who do not want to support a state, raising armies, should do so. They should not cooperate with the state in its efforts by not paying the taxes. Then the non-violent resister should understand the difference between the aggressor and the defender and having followed the difference, he should do all to support the defender in a non-violent manner. If there is an occasion he should sacrifice his life. Even if both the parties are fighting with arms, the defender should have the moral support from the person professing non-violence. Gandhian non-violence does recognize offensive and defensive violence and the non-violent resister is on the side which is just.

When there is war among different nations, non-violence should be resorted to. It was wrong, according to Gandhi, on the part of China to have faced the Japanese aggression by resorting to arms. The Chinese should have behaved non-violently and told Japan, "Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining 200 millions won't bend their knee to you." 401 The

399. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.20.

400. Harlian, December 14, 1947, p.468.

401. Harlian, December 24, 1938, p.394.

Chinese should have developed love towards the Japanese inspite of their wrong acts. Had this love been shown by the Chinese towards Japan, it would have been the exhibition of the greatest courage which is a very important factor of non-violence. The Japanese arms will not be appreciated by the non-violent resister because he loves the Japanese nor can he pray for the success of the Chinese arms. The non-violent resister will pray for the success of the just cause and side. The non-violent resister will be in the service of the friend and enemy in the same manner without fear for his own safety. In the case of an epidemic or a major disturbance the non-violent resister will hurry up to reach the trouble spot and manifest his non-violence and courage. Even if one side is the aggressor, the non-violent resister will not pray to God for its downfall. Rather if a few persons of one side fall into the hands of the other party and if they are in danger of being manhandled, the non-violent resister will go to their help even risking his own life. This will put to shame the party ill-treating these persons and some of the persons of the other side may also carry this message to their country and might begin to behave in such a manner. Gradually this sort of behaviour will be in one's neighbourhood, country and then it may take the whole world by surprise.

When Gandhi was asked about the behaviour of a neutral country like Switzerland which was disarmed and which allowed other nations to be destroyed Gandhi replied that Switzerland did not behave non-violently and courageously. Normally it should have refused all support

to the invading armies whose troops were using its territory to go to other countries. The Swiss people—men, women and children—should have formed a regular human wall to non-violently resist the attempt of other armies to walk through its territory. These men could have died in the process but then it would have been difficult for these marching-armies to repeat this experiment. Similarly when Abyssinia was subjugated by Italy in 1936 completely Gandhi said that had Abyssinia behaved non-violently it could not have been subdued. Abyssinia should not have taken recourse to arms, nor should it have gone to the League of Nations in appeal for an armed intervention in its favour. Even then Italy, with its armed might could have captured Abyssinia but only its land and not its people who would have sacrificed their lives in non-violent resistance and certainly Italy would never have wanted only the capture of land without the subjugation of the people there.

Similarly if Englishmen were to follow the path of non-violence, they should have given up their imperialism and also renounced the use of arms. If such things happened Italy would have been morally forced to surrender. It would have brought only a miraculous conversion due to which Italy would also have given up its military tendencies. Now then about a situation in which the nations behaved like gangsters with the purpose of aggrandizement and subjugation of other nations eg. gangsterism between nations as it happened when Japan attacked Manchuria in the early thirties of the present century or when Italy attacked Abyssinia. Similarly when there was the use of force in Spain, the capture of Austria by Germany and annexation of the Sudetan land of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany on the eve of the Second World War non-violence could have been

followed. Even this sort of gangsterism could have been met by non-violence. The use of force unleashes force and then there is a chain reaction when there is massive preparation for war with the use of arms and armaments as it happened in the case of the rise of Hitler and Mussolini.

Sometimes an argument is advanced that non-violent resistance becomes ineffective in the case of its dealings with Fascist and Nazi forces because its success depends upon the moral and humanitarian level of the other party in question but if democracies can be tackled by the non-violent approach, fascist and Nazi regimes also can be dealt with likewise. Of course, it is a fact that in the latter case a greater suffering is required on the part of the people. Sometimes there is a doubt about the efficacy of non-violence when it is faced with a determined and barbarous person like Hitler who had designs of World empire and believed in the extermination of the Jews as a race. Of course, there are not many examples in history of the use of non-violence against the might of a dictator like Hitler but there is the other side of this problem also. A person like Hitler might not be affected by the suffering of the non-violent resister but that should not matter because the honour of the non-violent resister lies in offering non-violent resistance and it does not wait for pity on the part of anybody. But persons like Hitler always built up their strength of force by believing that the people could be subdued by force. But in situations where non-violent resistance is offered even to a person like Hitler by men, women and children by not harbouring any ill-will towards him, it will be a unique experience even for him as he also has a similar soul as is possessed by the

non-violent resister.

Even a dictator like Hitler goes away from the world empty handed as was the case with Alexander, the Great. A great empire involves many problems and great difficulties. If a few nations are conquered, they cannot be held under subjugation perpetually. The world will not be morally high by the deeds of the dictators. Had the nations like England, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway and others said to Hitler that they would face him only non-violently, the task of a person like Hitler would have become easy. Without much preparation on his part and resistance on the other, occupation of different countries would have been there. Some non-violent persons would, of course, be killed in the process but the moral stature of these countries would have risen. Commenting upon Hitler Gandhi said that he would be nowhere **if the people did not give him their backing.** Gandhi wrote, "...if one **depended upon** superior violence in order to destroy violence of the Hitlerian type, then small nations would have hardly any chance of survival. It was only when a nation **individually refused to be beaten** by Hitlerism or any combination of forces of violence, and stuck to its post at the cost of its life, but not at the cost of its honour, that it had a chance of survival. So that non-violence alone was **the only guarantee of protection against the heaviest odds.**"<sup>402</sup> After all **the Germans** as a nation had also a heart equal to that possessed by any other nation in the world. Such a nation would revolt against its own hero if he did not change **his policies,** believed Gandhi. **There is always a danger of the**

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402. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, o.201.

disaster of arms in an armed conflict which certainly cannot change the heart of the people. It was the German defeat in the first World War which took up the challenge of the victor nations and threw up a person like Hitler to guide them in an armed revolution and violent war. It is a fact that the German nation and Hitler did not change their heart but one should not become desperate. One should have only more patience and self-confidence. One should be ready to suffer more also.

Once Gandhi posed the question as to whether the Jews as a race could have resisted the tyranny perpetrated on them by Germany. Could there be a method by which their self-respect be retained?

Basically any person or any race which has faith in God does not feel lonely or deserted. Jews believe in Jehovah who is their God and that is why they must not have felt helpless. The Jews should not have run away from Germany which they should have claimed as their home as much as the Germans did. They should not have bothered had they been killed in the process. They should have refused to be expelled and cruelly treated. Even one Jew could have taken the lead without the hope of support from other Jews. Gandhi believed that had they accepted this prescription, their condition could not have been worse. A determination to undergo voluntary suffering gives much strength which is not possible when one gets sympathy from others. If people are God-fearing, they do not fear death, which, if it comes at the hands of the tyrant, should be considered deliverance from earthly existence.

To Gandhi it is a pleasant sleep to be followed by a more refreshing atmosphere when one gets up. Gandhi thought that the Jews



in Germany were in a much better position to offer non-violent resistance to Hitler than were the Indians in South Africa against the British because the Jews have been a compact community with an organized world public opinion behind them. They would have converted the Germans by their resolute, firm, but non-violent action. Jews in Palestine were advised by Gandhi that they should not have gone there under the armed protection of the British but they should have attempted the conversion of the heart of the Arabs because without the goodwill of the Arabs it is impossible for them to live there. To Gandhi the ruler of the Arab and the Jewish hearts was the same God. Gandhi suggested to them to offer Satyagraha before the Arabs and be shot dead in the process. If they did so world-opinion would be in favour of their realizing their religious desire of settling down in Palestine. Had they renounced the use of force with the British support, there could be many ways of negotiating with the Arabs. Gandhi suggested that the Jews should claim their residence in Palestine or for the matter of that anywhere else by the path of non-violence, by loving others.

Again elaborating this point Gandhi said that active non-violence was love which was not adulterated. It is a sort of feeling of help and love to one's fellows. Had the Jews adopted active non-violence i.e. the spirit of fellow-feeling towards the Germans their hearts would have melted and thus war could be abolished from their midst at least. Gandhi believed in renouncing violence from the heart itself which would lead to the development of a great force available to the person doing it. Gandhi earnestly believed that the sufferings of the non-violent could melt the hearts even of the greatest tyrants.

We advised the Jews to summon the soul-power which is a necessary corollary to non-violence. He believed that had they done it, even Hitler would have bowed before them. Gandhi believed that ahimsa (non-violence) was most useful in the face of the greatest (himsa) violence. Those persons who sacrifice their lives non-violently for a noble cause may not see the result of their suffering even in their life-time but it is certain that if belief in ahimsa or non-violence persists the result will be good definitely.

But non-violent resistance, for an ordinary observer, could be an impossibility during an aerial war and bombardment when there is no personal contact between the two parties but here also non-violent resistance can be there. For the release of the destructive bomb the human hand works and at the back of it is the human heart, which causes it to act. Then there is the basic presumption that large scale terrorism will perhaps bring about the downfall of the opponent as the aggressor party very much wanted. But in this situation if the defending party determines not to be subject to the will of the aggressor and not to face it in the aggressor's language, aggressor will find that his tyranny is not worth the trouble. Gandhi felt that when the non-violent resisters go on sacrificing, a point of saturation will be reached after which he will feel that no more attacks should be made. If all the mice of the world were to decide in a conference about not fearing the cat and going into its mouth, the mice will ultimately live. Some people might think that dictatorial persons like Hitler and Mussolini have no conscience normally but that is starting on a wrong assumption.

The fact is that non-violence fundamentally believes in the oneness of human nature and thus when there is love from one side the other side is also attracted. The main point is that Hitler's and Mussolini's violence was always faced with violent efforts from the opposite side and thus they never had to face non-violent resistance in their life-time. So if non-violent resistance had been given to them they would have thought it better than and superior to violence. The non-violent resister's success never depends upon the pity of his opponent but on his firm faith in God. If in the process of non-violent resistance towards Hitler, for example, the Czechs would have died, it would have been a marvellous victory for them. The Czechs could be demoralized due to the presence of force but then there would be no defeat of non-violence. It would be only inadequate in its application. Then finally, Germany could have rehabilitated its own population in Czechoslovakia but this could not have been helped even when violent means were to be adopted because the other party was violent in a greater measure. So non-violent resistance is the best method in all circumstances.

The futility of violence was amply demonstrated in the Second World War. Wars begin for many reasons. "Wars between groups of men forming social units always take place when these units, tribes, dynasties, churches, cities, nations, exercise unrestricted sovereign power. Wars between these social units cease the moment sovereign power is transferred from them to a larger or higher unit." 403 Had Hitler been victorious he could not have completely subjugated England

403. Emery Reeves, *Anatomy of Peace*, p.110.  
(Penguin Books, New York, 1947)

During the Second World War, Gandhi appealed to Englishmen to adopt the method of non-violence instead of violence or war for the settlement of disputes among nations because Gandhi believed earnestly that there would be no real democracy, irrespective of the victory of the Allied or the Axis Powers. He called the Second World War a curse upon humanity but it gave one effective warning also. It was a curse because it reduced man to the status of an animal. During the war, all distinctions between those who were actively fighting and those who were not were eliminated because the civilian population, innocent men, women and children and even the patients in the hospitals experienced the impact of the war which was devastating indeed. The universities and even orphanages are not spared during the destructive process of a war. Truth is the first casualty in a war. It was the responsibility of Britain to safeguard small nationalities which it could not effectively. Thus war is a curse. Then it serves the purpose of warning also in as much as, if the results are not heeded, man will put even the beasts to utter shame by his ungentlemanly and indecent behaviour. Gandhi accepted that he did not have the courage to comment upon the nature of the conflict when it broke out but a bit later he could say so.

Gandhi appealed to the combatants to establish peace not because they were much tired in the process of war but because he considered war to be bad. If the Allied-Powers wanted to finish Nazism, the way was not of war because the other side was also adopting the same technique of destruction as was done by them. The difference in destruction may be of degrees only but it is of the same sort. If continuous practice is done in destruction, it becomes thorough and complete. On the violent scale one has to be more violent

to finish violence. There may be any cause like defence of the national interests etc. but no such cause can and should permit the heinous killings that are very basic to the institution of war. So a cause to defend which inhumanity is practised cannot be a just cause. Gandhi wanted Britain to have fought the Nazis without the help of arms or with the help of arms which are non-violent.

We felt that Britain should not have used the arms because they had outlived their utility for humanity. He wanted Britain in the initial stages to invite Mussolini and Hitler and give them whatever countries they wanted from British possessions. Even England should have been given to them but the people should have retained their souls and minds. If the Nazis wanted to occupy English homes, they should have been vacated in such a situation. And if due to their violent approach, a passage was denied to the English men, women and children, they should have been ready to be killed in the process instead of owing allegiance to them. This was the method of non-violent non-cooperation suggested by Gandhi to Britain in the war time. Of course he did not know that the balance would be favourable to them alone. But it applies to all sides. There should be a feeling of love. Gandhi, of course, accepted that non-cooperation in India was also not devoid of hatred. He said, "whether it is the defect of our present system of education or the prevailing tendencies there appears to me to be a general eclipse of faith everywhere...." 406 Yet he believed that had this non-violence been applied on the continent of Europe, so many innocent men, women and children would not have been killed nor would there have been a fierce wave of mutual hatred and animosity.

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Gandhi told this not simply in a casual manner of a mere preacher who never practises what he says. He said it with confidence after having practised it for many years in his individual life, in South Africa and then in India. He had applied it in different walks of life. He was conscious of its success in every field. If it failed it was not due to the fault of non-violence as such as due to the individuals involved. Gandhi was after all an incessant seeker after Truth which was another representation of God to him. As a matter of fact in this search for Truth and God, the idea of non-violence came to him. Gandhi lived to spread this idea with a missionary zeal. He adopted non-violence in his approach to the Englishmen. Whatever the struggle for independence in different phases might have been, he never hated the Englishmen. Non-violence ultimately demands universal love under which there is no scope for the mutual hatred of different nations.

Further explaining this point, Gandhi dwelt upon a state where the non-violent army does not yield its soul to the conqueror. It meant that one should not do what one's conscience did not permit. Gandhi believed, "there should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech and Truth in action."<sup>407</sup> Suppose the enemy were to force the defeated party to do something which was humiliating it should not submit to this eg. if one is asked to rub his nose or pull his ears, it should not be done but if the conqueror wants one's possessions they should be readily given because the non-violent resister has to learn from the very beginning that the worldly possessions are not connected

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407. M.K. Gandhi, From Yervada Mandir, p.2.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1945)

with one's soul. Whatever a man thinks his, he should have only if the world allows him to possess it. By so doing he is not yielding his conscience certainly. Then one should not yield one's mind also which means that one should not become a slave to temptations. Man is tempted in the wrong direction very often due to his greedy nature and words of appreciation from someone.

A person who is weak-minded can never become a satyagrahi. A person of firm will can be a true satyagrahi and a follower of Truth and Ahimsa. But there is a difference between 'stead-fastness' and 'obstinacy'. Before coming to any decision, one should think over the various aspects of a problem several times. And if a man learns that his decision was wrong but even then he sticks to it, it will be an obstinate behaviour on his part. Gandhi believed that Ahimsa was superior even to the Atom Bomb. "There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins (Truth and Ahimsa) constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world...What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman and child irrespective of the colour of the skin." 408



When one refuses to owe allegiance to the conqueror, it means that nothing will be done which would facilitate the activities of the conqueror. This also means that one should not bow to the supremacy of the conqueror or the victor. A satyagrahi is detached from his body which means that he does not bother even if he is killed. So he will not admit defeat, let the conqueror kill him if he likes. When the body is already dead for the satyagrahi, why should he make efforts to kill anybody? If one dies while killing someone, it is the death of a defeated man because victory of the soul and not the body is the ultimate object of a satyagrahi. If the enemy cannot get his desired object from the opposite party when it is alive, he will make a decision to kill this party in attaining this object. But one should think about a situation in which the enemy realizes that the other party will not resist violently. In such a case perhaps the conqueror may lose all interest and enthusiasm in killing this party. Hunters normally have this experience and that is why cows are not hunted at all. But here, I fear, Gandhi was idealistic. Unfortunately, cows are being killed the world over. Under the concept of non-violence the imperrealistic tendencies have to be given up in the international field.

Then Gandhi commented also upon the racial conflict. He said, "supposing I was a Negro, and my sister was ravished by a white or lynched by a whole community, what would be my duty? - I ask myself. And the answer comes to me: I must not wish ill to these, but neither must I cooperate with them. It may be that ordinarily I depend on the lynching community for my livelihood. I refuse to cooperate with them, refuse even to touch the food that comes from them, and I refuse to cooperate with even my brother Negroes who tolerate the

wrong...I have often in my life resorted to the plan. Of course a mechanical act of starvation will mean nothing. One's faith must remain undimmed whilst life ebbs out minute by minute. But I am a very poor specimen of the practice of non-violence and my answer may not convince you. But I am striving very hard, and even if I do not succeed fully in this life, my faith will not diminish." 409

Gandhi discussed the issue of disarmament also and he felt that if a nation instead of arming itself to the teeth and then subjugating the innocent weaker races, believed in uplifting these people morally without arming itself, it would give better results. He felt that if a nation resorted to voluntary disarmament, it would take bold steps with great firmness and then its moral stature would go very high in the comity of nations. Before the general disarmament, "...some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgements will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself." 410 Gandhi was confident that permanent peace is possible because human nature is Godly. Regarding world peace Gandhi said, "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature." 411 The non-violent methods fail because the faith

409. Harlian, March 14, 1936, p.39.

410. M.K. Gandhi, For Pacifists, p.81.

411. Harlian, May 16, 1936, p.109.

of the workers in this is lacking. If only part of the conditions non-violence is observed, peace is impossible to attain. Otherwise it should not be difficult. If those who control the forces of destruction, know the result of their use and if they renounce these completely, permanent peace in the world is certainly possible.

Unless the great powers of the world renounce their imperialistic aims, peace is an impossibility. It will be possible also if the great nations stop believing in mutual competition and adding to their worldly possessions which kill the soul. At the root of all these disturbances is a lack of faith in God. About international league Gandhi said, "...there would be an international league only when all the nations big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned...."<sup>412</sup>

If non-violence is followed by the states in their mutual relations, there will be a general atmosphere of goodwill, love and respect. When we analyse the problems in the world it is really very strange to find that the christians who believe in the mission of peace fling these noble ideas to the air in the practical life. It was the experience of Gandhi himself that the basic virtues of the human race can be developed even by an ordinary individual by constant and continuous practice. It is this possibility due to which man can be distinguished from the rest of living beings in this world.

If one or a few nations were really to renounce war as an instrument of national policy and resort to disarmament voluntarily, it would be found that permanent peace is established in the world.

If all the nations of the world voluntarily adopt the path of non-violence, the world will become a better place to live in and the future generations of mankind will write eulogies in their praise and honour. If there is no fear of destruction; if disarmament is resorted to, it will be an eye-opener for others. What is required in this direction is the lead by a single nation or a group of nations. But at the same time the great nations have to revise their very attitude, i.e. they have to give up their imperialistic designs and ways of exploitation of the undeveloped regions of the world. Gandhi was against war and, "...he was trying to devise a mass instrument of operation which will work in terms of non-violence. He was firm in his opinion that war will never bring us that freedom which he wanted for the common people. He was not afraid of bloodshed; he was eager to shed his own blood for the sake of the blood of Satyagrahis." 413

One thing is certain, that if race for armaments continues and humanity is again engulfed in a war there will be unprecedented annihilation and destruction of all that has been long cherished by the civilized world so far, because, "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. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications." 414 The thermo-nuclear weapons have a tendency

413. N.K. Bose & P.H. Patwardhan, Gandhi And Indian Politics, p.20 (Vora & Co., Bombay, 1938)

414. Harisan, November 12, 1938, p.328.

to kill the soul of man and destroy everything that has been precious in civilization. Gandhi has written also about the present age of the atom bomb. He said, "...in this age of the atom bomb there was no weapon like non-violent resistance." 415

Of course in the Second World War the ambitions and actions of Japan were not dignified but less dignified was the action of the Allied forces which dropped two Atom Bombs on the two towns of Japan- Hiroshima and Nagasaki- and thus killed innocent men, women and children. There cannot be any bombs to destroy such bombs and there cannot be the destruction of violence by following violence. The way for mankind to get out of violence is only by the path of non-violence. If there is hate it can be overcome only by love. If the other party also begins to hate, the dimensions of hatred increase. Gandhi said, "I believe in what Max Muller said years ago namely that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it." 416 Gandhi further said, "we are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice in its own home. Should a bankrupt, who has been by the gamble in the share market, sing the praise of that particular form of gambling." 417 War creates strange situations.

Fay writes about the undesirability of a war that, "none of the Powers wanted a European War. Their governing rulers and ministers, with very few exceptions, all foresaw that it must be a frightful struggle, in which the political results were not absolutely

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415. M.K. Gandhi, Non-Violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.261.

416. Harlian, July 7, 1946, p.212.

417. Harlian, November 16, 1947, p.412.

certain, but in which the loss of life, suffering and economic consequences were bound to be terrible." 418 Gandhi did not believe in the destruction of things by the party which is being attacked in a war and whose territory is in danger of being occupied. Nobody has to be taken as an enemy. War should have a law also in which there is no scope for poisoning the wells or destroying the standing food crops. If such destructive measures are not adopted it becomes a sacrifice which purifies the soul of the person avoiding these. Gandhi also felt that international organizations have to work for peace to relieve men from their passions and heal their wounds created by their own follies. President Nixon also remarked at the UN, "there is no noble destiny, nor any greater gift one age could make to the ages that follow, than to forge the key to a lasting peace." 419 Gandhi believed that non-violence could solve all the ills of the world. Its manifestation would be complete when no nation in the world had a superiority or inferiority complex i.e. all nations were independent and equal.

There is something very unreal about war which is waged to keep and enjoy the spoils by the victor nations. Britain used violence as a democracy towards India. The USA has been doing the same thing towards the Negroes. Violence is based upon exploitation which develops in the industrialized civilization. The villages should be self-sufficient and then even a dictator will find it difficult to destroy these non-violent villages. It has been the past experience

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418. Sidney Bradshaw Fay, The Origins Of The World War, p.547.  
(The Macmillan Company, New York, 1947)

419. Richard M. Nixon, View Point USA No.64 - The Time Has Come For Peace, p.5.  
(O.S.I.S., New Delhi, 1969)

that the results of violence do not last long. Violence breeds violence. In a state there is centralization of functions normally but, "centralization as a system is inconsistent with the non-violent structure of society."<sup>420</sup> It is certain that sooner than later humanity as a whole has to take to non-violence if the human civilization has to continue.

Gandhi was opposed to Bolshevism due to its violent motives and approach. Gandhi said that he was compelled, due to his non-violence, to be associated even with the anarchists with the object of rectifying their mistake of believing in violence. In the human society people should concentrate upon performing their duties and if they do so rights will result from these. For peace in the world all must have equal opportunities and have the same chances of development *spiritually*. "...The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs."<sup>421</sup> The answer to world peace is non-violence as Gandhi also said, "there is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never that of the eternal law."<sup>422</sup>

420. Harizan, January 18, 1942, p.5.

421. M.K. Gandhi, Gandhi's Correspondence With The Government (1942-44), p.175.  
(Navalivan, Ahmedabad, 1945)

422. Harizan, June 29, 1947, p.209.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION-AN ESTIMATE OF MAHATMA GANDHI'S NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhi, who throughout his life, practised and preached non-violence, was killed by the bullets of a Hindu on the 30th January 1948 and "thus ended a long and active life inspired by noble idealism. He departed this life after giving the world the key to a new way of life. And the world too realized that poor though India might be, she had something to give to mankind. He had love and affection for all men irrespective of race, caste, religion and nationality. By inspiring India by that ideal, he wanted the soul of India to blossom forth in all its glory. To that end he made a solemn offering of his own life...Human nature is essentially the same, and on the realization of this truth lies the secret of the well-being of the world. His life was like a clarion call announcing the advent of the day yet in the womb of time when this realization will dawn on mankind...." <sup>423</sup> In the course of his trial on March 18, 1922, Gandhi said, "Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which had done irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips...." <sup>424</sup>

It is quite befitting to analyse Gandhi's non-violence critically and comment upon its contribution, relevancy and future at a time when humanity is reaching a point of no-return due to the nuclear weapons which are posing a danger to the very existence of the

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423. P.C. Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi As I Saw Him (Epilogue).  
(S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1968)

424. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol.II, p.129.



present civilization. He said, "In Satyagraha there is no place for fraud or falsehood. Fraud and falsehood are today stalking the world...." 425 At present we are at the cross-roads when the world is in a crisis. Mankind is currently faced with a question which is directly relevant to its very survival. Gandhi held, "Not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by with-holding his hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the (aggressor's) demand (backed by force), is the only civilized way of going on in the world...Peace through superior violence inevitably leads to the atom bomb and all that it stands for. It is the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which is not possible without the former." 426

If race for armaments continues unchecked in this bi-polar world which appears to be moving on with blinkers towards its complete destruction, naturally the decision is to be made whether we want violence or non-violence. No body wants self effacement; no one wishes the reduction of this world to ashes, which is quite possible due to the existence of the weapons of mutual destruction but, "some day perhaps the people of the west will realize the significance of what has happened and will learn from the East to apply the methods of the Cross to the solving of their own great problems, especially the problem of international warfare. But at present, it is to be feared, we are too comfortable, too well off, too well fed. At present Satyagraha is looked upon in the west, in spite of the astounding victory which it has won, as ridiculous and undignified...." 427 The

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425. M.K. Gandhi, Gandhi's Correspondence With The Government, 1942-44, p.175.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1945)

426. Harjan, March 30, 1947, p.86.

427. Ted Dunn, ed., A Search For Alternatives To War And Violence,  
p.195.

tragedy reaches the catastrophe when man, despite his wish otherwise, becomes a party to the creation of forces of destruction.

Man basically wants peace, security, liberty and property which are all at stake during the times of a war. The basic characteristic of war is violence. Gandhi, by propounding the philosophy of non-violence gave a new dimension to the human approach and also a possible answer to the very many baffling problems. He proved its success in his individual life and to some extent in the national struggle for independence in India but in the International affairs it has not been very much used so far. It is really doubtful if it will ever succeed in the relations among nations. It is a thesis which travels on the axis points of truth, soul, sacrifice and fearlessness. It is an attempt to convert the very nature of a human being, a nation and then of the whole world-society. In the industrialized west a moral genius of the stature of Gandhi has not existed in recent times. "What has not yet been found in the west is a moral genius of such commanding spiritual personality as to be able to unite and combine various organized efforts (for world peace) into one overwhelming movement of non-violence which shall be strong enough to sweep away, on the tide of world approval, the opposing forces....." 428

Gandhian approach is honest and humble. It is an ideal worth cherishing but difficult to be attained. It demands of a human being divine faculties of head and heart which is not a common phenomenon. Even then it appears to be quite a good solution for the problems of the world. If the people and the states of the world do not learn to

behave properly, do not understand the significance of love and Ahimsa, truth and God, well expressed by Gandhi himself, the day will not be far when whatever has been precious and treasured so far, meets its utter doom and ruination. Hence there is the value of the contribution of Gandhi in the form of non-violence. That is why it is relevant today. It is a beacon light for the future generations of the troubled, frustrated war and strife-torn world. Gandhi never compromised on principles. He was the messenger of brotherly feelings among members of different communities. Gandhi's contribution with reference to non-violence was that to him means were as important as ends. To him means justify the ends because violence breeds violence while non-violence creates a healthy and clean atmosphere of mutual love and respect. Gandhi wrote, "I believe that all life is one ...we must become living embodiments of Truth and Love, for God is Truth and Love." 429

Disarmament was his ideal though he knew that the people in independent India did not welcome it. To establish peace through the path of non-violence, a nation and for the matter of that all the nations, have to sacrifice a lot without which peace remains an academic topic, to be discussed only in the debating societies. To Gandhi Truth and Non-Violence were most important. "He observed: It has been said that God is Truth, perhaps it is better said, Truth is God...

Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute...

Even good ends do not justify dubious means...

Our real enemies are our fears, greeds and egoism ...

We must change ourselves before we can change others ...

The laws of family, of truth and love and charity are also applicable to groups, countries and nations...." 430 All these concepts are considered to be impracticable in political life but Mahatma Gandhi effectively used them. Gandhi further said, "...We are living in the midst of death, trying to grope our way to Truth. Perhaps it is as well, that we are beset with danger at every point in our life, for, inspite of the knowledge of the danger and of our precarious existence, our indifference to the source of all life is excelled only by our amazing arrogance." 431

Gandhi's non-violence meant the blending of morality with politics; rather it would be better to say that morality was the guiding star for politics in Gandhi's non-violence. About the attitude of the Congress to non-violence, Jehru said in 1929, "We have not the material or the training for organized violence, and individual or sporadic violence is a confession of despair. The great majority of us, I take it, judge the issue not on moral but on practical grounds, and we reject the way of violence...it is because it promises no substantial results. But if this Congress, or the nation at any future time, comes to the conclusion that methods of violence, will rid us of slavery, then I have no doubt, it will adopt them." 432 In the world of today justice and righteousness merely appear to exist but Gandhi tore the clouds of deception asunder by propounding non-violence and by giving a moral touch to every thing he came across.

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430. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi 100 years, pp.151-52. (Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1968)

431. Young India, July 17, 1927, p.222.

432. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.281. (The English Universities Press, London, March 1963)

It was surprising indeed that the frame of the mighty British bureaucracy could not oppose Gandhi when it was faced with his non-violent approach, at least in his individual life.

Gandhi's non-violence was a continuous experiment with truth as also was his whole life. The ideal of truth is very high and sometimes it is a bit difficult to attain it but Gandhi believed in having faith due to which it would become easy to attain even such an ideal. According to certain writers Gandhi gave the Congress a Hindu bias which is not correct. "C.F. Andrews the English missionary and Congress sympathizer, who became his close friend...drew attention to the above trend as early as 1908 in a letter written to the Viceroy's private secretary - 'There is a rapid Hinduising of "national" ideas going on among the younger men. The boycott spirit follows inevitably as a consequence. The religious element becomes mingled with the political...and a Hindu religious colouring is given to National ideas'." <sup>433</sup> But it is not correct because he treated all the religions alike. Gandhi believed in perpetual struggle to attain perfection and it was in his pursuit of non-violence that he changed his very nature of living. He represented the common man of India, who was poor and who would shiver in the winter and be exposed to the vagaries of an inclement hot summer. It was his great contribution to have made the Indian National Movement a mass movement, a mass upsurge which was originally intended to be non-violent.

Further, so far the human society has mostly known only the inhuman means of the use of arms in a violent way to settle the disputes. He wrote, "I have found that life persists in the midst of

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433. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.276.

destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth-living." 434 The violent way involves infliction of trouble, suffering and pain on the opponent. Then there is a competition among both the parties for being able to apply degrees of violence. This does not develop individuality for "good brought about through force destroyed individuality. Only when the change was effected through the persuasive power of non-violent non-cooperation i.e. love, could the foundation of individuality be preserved and real abiding progress be assured for the world." 435 Under the non-violent way shown by Mahatma Gandhi to the afflicted world, the belief is not in causing suffering to the other party. Here one chooses to suffer himself and that is the good point of Gandhi's spiritualistic approach to this problem with a moral overtone.

Non-violence also suggests renouncing violence for all times to come, which, if done, will be a fine achievement of mankind. There is no scope for hatred in Gandhi's non-violence. "The world is weary of hate. We see the fatigue overcoming western nations. We see that this song of hate has not benefited humanity. Let it be the privilege of India to turn a new leaf and set a lesson to the world." 436 Of course, Mahatma Gandhi succeeded to a great extent in spiritualizing politics but he put a tough and utopian ideal before his successors, who are not made of that divine fibre of which Gandhi was made. Many persons were doubtful of the Mahatma's approach. "Mystics", wrote

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434. Young India, October 1, 1931, p.286.

435. Harilal, March 9, 1947, p.58.

436. Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji In Indian Villages, pp.166-67.  
(S. Ganesan, Madras, 1927)

Subhash Chandra Bose, "would always hold an honoured place in India, but it is not their lead that we shall have to follow if we are to create a new India, at once free, happy and great...we have to live in the present...Gandhism will land free India in a ditch." 437 This is not very much correct. He had the capacity to convert clay models into men but after his going away from the Indian scene, it appears that clay models, who do not want to rise to the ordinary status of men even, dominate our society. Normally, there is no scope for religion in politics but Mahatma Gandhi attached much importance to it. But Jawaharlal Nehru was always critical of his bringing religion into the domain of politics.

As a matter of fact Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is the legacy of the glorious heritage of India in which our society has got the ideal of the great saints who would subject themselves to a singular life of self-suffering for the sake of the whole humanity. Mahatma Gandhi, while following his non-violence was slightly different from the sages of ancient India. He did not renounce the world but denounced its evils without hatred. He worked in the midst of the vast sea of humanity for the welfare of the humblest individual by accepting the path of self-suffering and devotion to love and Truth. In his introduction to the first volume of Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase, Pyarelal writes, "It is vital for us to know the road on which he sets us and that by which we arrived and where the two bifurcated. We must understand where we are today and whither bound and whether that is the goal which the Father of the Nation had

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437. Penderel Moon, Gandhi And Modern India, p.284.

envisaged for the India of his dreams." 438 Non-violence will always remain a good ideal to be attained.

Mahatma Gandhi struggled to implement his idea and ideal of non-violence in the practical life but the human faculties are so frail and weak that for the succeeding generations, to attain this standard would be something really difficult especially in the modern industrial civilization where a man has become very busy. Yet he was very optimistic. He said, "That I shall have to repent if I cannot stop violence does not enter into the picture of non-violence. No man can stop violence. God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in His hands. Here material means cannot stop violence but this does not mean that material means should not be employed for the purpose. The deciding factor is God's grace...we have to try as far as lies in our power." 439

Another contribution made by Mahatma Gandhi through his concept of non-violence is fearlessness. One will never be able to sacrifice unless he is fearless. After all it was the feeling of fearlessness which was infused in the Indian masses by Swami Vivekanand. The Mahatma carried it further through his non-violence where there is relationship between God and Truth due to which one does not fear anybody, least so the one who perpetuates injustice on him. One cannot resist evil without it. A nation cannot do away with its oppressors unless it is equipped with this quality which is

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438. Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase, Vol.I, Introduction. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1956)

439. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence In Peace And War, Vol.II, p.95. (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1949)



an essential corollary of non-violence. A non-violent satyagrahi has to be fearless to a greater extent than a person resorting to violence. *The path of non-violence brings prosperity and progress.* Gandhi believed that it was better to die than to submit to evil and injustice. In the 1942 movement in August his slogan was 'do or die'. The energies of the whole nation in a non-violent but in a resolutely fearless manner were brought to the fore to oppose the injustice of the British. Mahatma Gandhi said in 1947 that he "was convinced that unless India developed her non-violent strength, she had gained nothing for her or for the world. Militarization of India would mean her destruction as well as of the whole world." 440

The concept of non-violence as practised by Mahatma Gandhi, makes it certain for us that even one individual is sufficient to set forces of construction in motion. Gandhi was, after all, a single individual, who, by the weapon of non-violence guided millions of Indians against a mighty empire. Further, non-violence at the individual level lays much emphasis upon the individual freedom which is fundamental to the existence of a democratic set up. The present century has seen totalitarian regimes in the form of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy and now communism in Russia, China and many other European countries where individual liberty and freedom are respected only by their negation. Thus his non-violence brought solace to the suffering humanity everywhere because he added the factor of freedom to the twin faculties of self-confidence and fearlessness which all go together to make any democratic structure glorious.

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440. M.K. Gandhi, *Delhi Diary*, p.235.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1948)

But one of the most important contributions of Mahatma Gandhi in this direction was that non-violence did not lay emphasis merely upon physical non-violence but also spiritual non-violence i.e. developing a thinking in terms of non-violence. It is a well known fact that all the major events including that of the sudden conflagration in the form of a world war first of all take root in the thinking of a few satanic statesmen and politicians and then are implemented in the form of mass mobilization of armies on innocent people of other countries. Similarly, barring a few stray events in the society, most of the crimes in our social structure are the results of an **organized blue-print** in the mind of some person at first. In this way Mahatma Gandhi, through his non-violence continued the heritage of ancient India where the purity of thought and action were the primary considerations. In the celebrated 'Gayatri Mantra', the Hindu worshipper prays to the Goddess, who controls the whole universe, **to keep his mind** in control. "The thing which distinguishes Gandhi from everybody else, including professors and teachers of religion is that he makes no distinction of religion as a thing apart from life." 441

The aims of the UNESCO were perhaps based on Gandhi's non-violence. About the role of the UNESCO Cushman Coyle writes, "it is **highly important for UNESCO to promote the use of printed material telling about the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights, to make known to the people the fact that they live in a world that may be friendly to them.**" 442 The non-violent approach does not

441. Kshitish Roy, *Gandhi Memorial Peace Number*, p.70.  
(*The Visva Bhavati Quarterly*, October, 1949)
442. David Cushman Coyle, *The United Nations And How It Works*, p.35.  
(The New American Library, April, 1958)

believe in prolonging th conflict. Its basic principle is mutual love and respect for the other party. It believes in bringing the conflicting parties together and then settling their problems amicably. In the higher political sense it believes in bringing the opposite parties to the conference table and then thrashing out the issues after mutual discussions. "In the United Nations, the human race is brought together, with all its virtues and faults, its wisdom and folly, and its good and ill-will." 443 The UN at present provides the venue of a conference where delegates of different nations meet to discuss their matters and problems for the purpose of their solution. Of course, the United Nations is the embodiment of the hopes of mankind for a better world where there would be peace.

In as much as the UN makes an effort to discuss different problems and arrive at an agreeable formula for peace, Gandhi's non-violence can be said to have affected it but even then there is one difference in both. In non-violence there is no scope for hatred for any party even if its intentions are wrong but in the UN the perfect atmosphere for this sort of non-violence does not at all exist. Even then it could be said that Gandhi's non-violence was a prelude to the establishment of the UN which hopes to maintain world peace and unity. These were the aspirations of Mahatma Gandhi also. We had earlier written, "It may be long before the law of love will be recognized in International Affairs. The machineries of Governments stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another. Yet...we can see how the world is moving steadily to realize that between nation and nation, as between man and man, force has failed

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443. David Cushman Coyle, The United Nations And How It Works, p.X.

to solve problems, but that the economic sanction of non-cooperation is far more mighty and conclusive than armies and navies." 444

His non-violence has influenced many movements in the world, "...The ideas of Mahatma Gandhi have profoundly influenced movements in other parts of the world, including the Civil Rights movement in the United States, and also because many of his ideas are in line with the principles and purposes of the charter of the United Nations." 445

The charter of the UN lays emphasis upon a higher standard of living of the people in the world, liberty of the individual, rights for women and equality among nations without any imperialistic designs on the part of any single nation. Gandhi believed in peace but it is to be established through non-violence. In the UN Charter also the member nations have agreed to avoid the use of force in their mutual relations. At the time of India's partition on 15th August 1947, Gandhi was shocked to see the communal flare-up. Non-violence though idealistic, yet had been practised by his countrymen. He was really feeling lonely towards the end of his life. On October 2, 1947, his last birthday, in reply to felicitations he said, "where do congratulations come in? It will be more appropriate to say *condolences*. There is nothing but anguish in my heart." 446

His interest was in saving the world civilization from degradation irrespective of the fact whether a single individual or the whole nation had to sacrifice. He once said, "we want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my part I do not want the

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444. Young India, June 23, 1919, p.50.
445. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi 100 Years, p.371. (Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1968)
446. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi 100 Years, p.10. (Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1968)

freedom of India if it means extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country, might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human race may live." 447 Of course he was not completely successful in his mission yet his failure was an eye-opener to the world. Gandhi represented the cult of love to his fellow beings in a world where there is much animosity and mutual hatred. Thus the value of his non-violence is for eternity. His non-violence succeeded in its failure because it put forward before mankind an ideal to be cherished, a goal to be craved for.

Apart from bringing independence to India, non-violence has influenced the people in a great way. "It (Satyagraha) has brought about," wrote Gandhi, "an awakening among the masses which would probably have taken generations otherwise...." 448 Gandhi exercised immense influence on the negro leader of the U.S.A., the late Martin Luther King. King derived inspiration from Gandhi because he also believed in resistance to violence but the question in the beginning before him was whether it should be given by following violence or

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447. D.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol. II, p.263.  
(Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri, Bombay, 1951)

448. Harijan, May 18, 1940, p.132.

non-violence because the latter expects much courage and greater sacrifice from the person offering it. King said, "Violence is impractical because the old eye-for-an-eye philosophy ends up leaving everybody blind. This method is wrong. This method is immoral. It is immoral because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for everybody. It is wrong because it seeks to annihilate the opponent rather than convert him...I am still convinced ...that non-violence is the most potent weapon available to the negro in his struggle for freedom and justice. If we succumb to the temptation of using violence in the struggle, unborn generations will be recipients of long and mighty bitterness." 449

Dr. King as a Civil Rights leader in America preached Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence, in the struggle of the Negroes against the white population. In America the Negroes have been denied their basic rights including the greatest of them-the right to social equality. Dr. King was much perturbed as a student about the inferior status of the Negroes there. His problem was how to get the right to social equality for the Negroes. He found the answer in Gandhi's non-violence. King had joined the Theosophical Seminary at Crozer in 1948 from where on one Sunday he visited Philadelphia to attend the speech of Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University. Dr. Johnson dwelt at length on the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. This impressed King much and he thought that after all there was a way out to combat the social evil against the Negroes, prevailing in the U.S. He said, "like most people, I had heard of Gandhi, but I had never studied him seriously. As I read I became deeply

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449. Martin Luther King, Gandhi Memorial Lecture 1963, quoted in I Have A Dream.  
(USIB, New Delhi)

fascinated by his campaigns of non-violent resistance...The whole concept of Satyagraha was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my scepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform...Love for Gandhi, was a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months. The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social contracts theory of Hobbes, the "back to nature" optimism of Rousseau, and the super-man philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the non-violent resistance philosophy of Gandhi...."450

Dr. King thoroughly studied Gandhi and began to use the method of non-violent resistance in his struggle. It was really unfortunate that this apostle of non-violence also was made the target of a bullet by a violent man. His work was not yet complete and despite the non-violent approach shown by King to the Negroes there were violent out-breaks in the form of racial riots which were maximum when Dr. King was assassinated in April, 1968. It is a fact that Dr. King also made a good contribution to the world in the form of non-violence but still the leaders of human society have not learnt anything. The lessons of the violent second World War are apt to be forgotten and the memory of incessant bombardments and blackouts those days is getting blurred in the minds of men. Still there are problems

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450. Martin Luther King, 1953, quoted in, I Have A Dream.  
(USIS, New Delhi)

like the West Asian crisis, unending Vietnam war and other trouble spots which could bring about a world war any time. The youth of Pakistan were up in a violent orgy against the existing regime there.

In the present context of world affairs it is doubtful whether non-violence will succeed. At such a critical juncture the honest follower of non-violence has to pause and think whether it will be powerful enough to tackle all the discordant notes in world civilization. "But what is needed from the advanced countries is not a change of method or organization so much as a change in attitude ... The qualities of love which seeks no return, and insight which appreciates what poor but proud people are feeling, are required to achieve the right cooperative approach."<sup>451</sup> Regarding the impact of non-violence on India, secularism of the Indian constitution appears to have been influenced by Gandhi's non-violence which professes tolerance of other faiths. Gandhi's non-violence did not mean only tolerance but also definite respect for other religions and faiths because without this basic principle and feeling there could be no hope of any balance in the social order where several different faiths exist. In this way communism, as practised in Russia and specially in the Peoples' Republic of China is directly against it because in communism religion is the opium of the people.

Religious tolerance was preached by Gautama Buddha and King Asoka enunciated a religious policy based upon tolerance. In the Indian society again in the first half of the 20th Century, the whole Indian sub-continent was resounding with the slogan of religious tolerance, preached and practised by Gandhi. Non-violence, as already

451. Ted Dunn, ed., A Search For Alternatives To War and Violence, p.93. (James Clarke & Co. Ltd., London, 1963)



observed, is based upon love and respect for the equality of man. Then Gandhi's non-violence is directly related to the welfare, happiness and survival of man in the world. It is Gandhi's concept of non-violence which has given birth to Sarvodaya, the concept of the good of all, which is preached today by Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan. It is the smallest individual, the most oppressed and the down-trodden who has to be uplifted. "Gandhian method and means is only the way of touching the heart and make mankind feel that 'Man's life is a complex of several conditions of life of which the economic condition of life is one'; the realisation of the above is the panacea for communism." 452

Today in India there is a talk of national integration.

Mahatma Gandhi's spiritualistic approach in his concept of non-violence is a good enough answer to the present day problems of national disintegration in Indian society. There is no composite feeling in India today and the different regions have a tendency to be concerned only with their particular problems in a parochial manner. When the people behave like this they forget the basic fact that there can be no difference between one person and another merely on the basis of caste or region. India, moving fast on the road to disintegration, could take a lesson from the non-violence of Gandhi. Not only India but also the whole world as such should take this lesson and lessen its torments, trials and tribulations. Then this modern age is of industrialization where the rattling wheels, the buzz and the whistle of the machines, sometimes sounds monotonous to the persons working

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452. V. Sankar Lal, Gandhian Way To World Peace, p.75.  
(Author, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, 1956)

there. The people are able to bear that monotony due to its results in the form of greater production, cheaper goods and economic welfare of the society. Gandhi suggested a new way and by this peace could be "warrior nations of the earth." 453

The fundamental question is whether wealth alone is sufficient to bring about human happiness. Gandhi's answer to this is that wealth is not the only source of happiness. Had it been so, the affluent societies of the western world would have been very happy. The industrial life develops tension in the mind of man which cannot be relieved by any amount of wealth. In the pursuit of wealth and pleasure, man loses his soul. So for the relief from tensions what is required is the development of morality, one's inner self, spirituality, which are fundamental to the concept of non-violence. After all, too many materialistic pleasures, an unending series of entertainments and leisure-saving machines become less exciting with the passage of time and with the increase in industrialization. In the materialistic civilization the individual feels very sorry and depressed because in the hum-drum world of materialism, he loses the jewel of his soul due to the lack of which he has to encounter the consequent tension, agitation and frustration.

Non-violence provides a good and dynamic answer to many problems of human civilization of today but it is debatable whether Gandhi's opposition to the industrial civilization is justified at all. The wonder that was India is fast fading away into insignificance due to casteism and narrowness, mutual hatred and suspicion. These have

no scope when one loves others and certainly does not hate them. Gandhi, through his non-violence, became the symbol of the unity of the whole of mankind. He wanted to see God face to face through his non-violence in order to attain 'Moksha' (Salvation). To do so he plunged into the waters of politics. He did so also to serve his society and finally the world by propounding his basic belief in love. He held that one should love his fellow brethren and even the opponent.

Now it is quite relevant from the point of view of a complete study and analysis of Gandhi's concept of non-violence to view its significance as compared to a few political theories. Gandhi gave us a timely warning. "He sought to review the individual before he is engulfed and lost under the weight of the machine. It was a message to the world where the individual has ceased to have any meaning. The individual is lost in empty abstractions like the nation, the state and the people. He is crushed in the name of his own welfare. Materialism has replaced humanism. Matter is more important than the soul of an individual. The significance of the individual is in numbers-it is merely mathematical. An attempt to review the individual in such conditions and in spite of all the reaction that it may mean was his humble contribution to world thought. The substitution of voluntary individual cooperation for the conflicts and compulsions of the present world was his ultimate goal. That was his legacy. This was his place in world thought." 454

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454. J.P. Goyal, Studies In Modern Indian Political Thought: Gandhi An Interpretation, p.93. (Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1964)

Though Gandhi has not given the outline of his political thought as Plato, Aristotle, Karl Marx and others did, yet his practical conclusions were based upon theoretical assumptions. It is a fact that Gandhi was a practical man as is obvious from his implementation of non-violence at different planes-individual, national and international. Gandhi has said and written about non-violence and many political problems. Thus his non-violence becomes relevant to the domain of political thought also. His political ideas give an answer to many problems, with which the modern world is faced. Gandhi, like some other thinkers and statesmen, had the unique experience of living through two great World Wars. He was faced with the mighty British imperialism. With the lapse of time, some of the past political ideologies came to be discredited and a few others began to enlist the support of the people. In this period of political unrest humanity was eagerly looking forward to something dynamic in the political field and this vacuum to some extent was filled up by the non-violence of Gandhi. He elaborated his ideas of non-violence and applied them to his own self, to the Indian Community in South Africa and to the problems in India before advising the people of the whole world to use them.

To the Hobbesian approach in Leviathan where human nature is treated as 'selfish, brutish, nasty, short and solitary', and Machiavellian approach in his 'prince' where crooked ways are suggested in state-craft to the administrator in an atmosphere surcharged with suspicion and doubt, Gandhi gave a fitting answer in his Non-Violence. To him the opponent is not to be hated and an average individual is to be given a suitable and venerable place in society. Really, "Gandhi was a new incarnation of Jean Jacques Rousseau and of Tolstoy,

denouncing the illusions and crimes of civilization and preaching to men the return to nature, to simple life, to health." 455 Further Gandhi is just like Rousseau about whom it has been written that "he saw the life and society from the side of the disinherited, the feeble, the vagabond, the starving. He saw above the political inequality the social inequality and he protested not so much against the nobility as against wealth. Equality to him is as precious as liberty, and the great proprietor who makes men poor is for him, as detestable as the despot who makes men slaves. Social justice and political injustice sustain themselves mutually." 456

In his non-violence where sufficient dignity is attached to the average person in society and where love overpowers hatred, Gandhi saw the unity of mankind, the possibility of one universe where there cannot be political disputes. If they are there, they are to be solved non-violently because the human spirit and not the human body is the most important element in his political thought. His ideas gave rise to the discussion and concept of a World Government and thus were responsible to some extent to give birth to the idea of a world organization. Gandhi can be credited with enough contribution to political thought. It is a new approach in the history of political thought. Gandhi insisted upon non-violence which is based upon Truth, morality and soul force. He said, "If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards ahimsa." 457

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455. S. Radhakrishnan, ed., Mahatma Gandhi, p.256.  
(George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1949)
456. B.R. Majumdar, ed., Gandhian Concept of State, p.19.  
(M.C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1957)
457. M.K. Gandhi, All Men are Brothers, p.86.  
(UNESCO And Orient Longmans, 1959)

His method was to make an appeal in an humble manner. This is not to be found in any political structure-democratic, socialist or communist. He wanted to establish a completely new social order with emphasis upon non-violence. Gandhi wrote, "I hold that non-violence 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 non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale." 458 He has also reflected in this connection on the democratic approach to the problems where there will be no centralization of political powers. In the same context he writes about the trusteeship of the rich, but it is an impossibility unless some divine power waves the magic wand or someone comes with Alladdin's lamp to change the heart of the rich who then begin to think of sharing their profits with the labourers and workers.

Karl Marx visualized such a condition but in his classless proletariat society where the state will gradually wither away, there is no scope for the rich persons, and least so for a few persons, pocketing all the profits. Then Marxism is much away from Gandhi's concept of non-violence because Marx does not attach any importance to the means. Gandhi "...conceived of a stateless, classless and casteless society...In Marx's time capitalism was the only danger confronting the world but in Gandhi's time the world is faced with three dangers-the danger of capitalism, of totalitarianism and their attendant, of violence embodied in the atom bombs and the other fatal weapons. For fighting against these he gave three weapons of non-

cooperation, non-centralization and non-violence respectively." 459

Gandhi opposes the institution of the State which he says, is not justified on the grounds of morality, history or economics. But he was not an anarchist because he did not want to abolish the state completely as is propounded by the anarchist thinkers. For sometime, he felt the necessity of a representative form of Government. His ideal society was to be stateless where importance is attached to autonomous village communities, bound together in a sort of federation which necessitated some sort of Government. He did not like the coercive authority of the state but did not denounce at the same time the ideal state itself which would not have absolute sovereignty. This is the view of the Pluralists also. In Gandhi's ideal state there is to be full-fledged democracy which is to be completely non-violent in its approach. "...democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest...." 460

In this sort of democratic structure the knowledge of and education in non-violence on the part of the vast majority of the people was deemed to be essential by Gandhi. In his democratic state there would be neither centralization of functions nor inequality in society. Gandhi was for village autonomy. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Gandhi in October 1945, "Briefly put, my view is that the question

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459. Mahadev Prasad, Social Philosophy Of Mahatma Gandhi, p.323. (Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, Gorakhpur, 1953)

460. Harjan, May 18, 1940, p.129.

before us is not one of truth versus untruth or non-violence versus violence. One assumes as one must that true cooperation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its contents should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily, embody truth and non-violence...Narrow minded people are much likely to be untruthful and violent." 461 Gandhi was for self Government where voluntary associations play an important part and in this way he was very near to the political thought of the Guild Socialists like Figgis, Gierke, G.D.H. Cole and others. Guild socialists believe in functional democracy and, "the principle of functional democracy is of considerable interest for political theory." 462 Again in the political domain he was for the self-government of the workers and here also he was one with the Guild Socialists.

As against the large scale industries he wanted the cottage industries where the worker is not to be dependent on anybody and is pleased to create something of his own. He wrote, "Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort. The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths." 463 Here he

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461. Kanwar Lal, Good Bye Mr. Gandhi, p.263.  
(Arts And Letters, Daryaganj, Delhi, 1969)
462. C.E.M. Joad, Modern Political Theory, p.76.  
(Oxford University Press, London, 1950)
463. Harlian, September 14, 1935, p.244.



was impressed with the writings of Ruskin also. Gandhi was against much interference by the Government with the individual liberty. He once wrote, "Freedom is a fruit of suffering, license is born of violence. What we are all pining for is freedom that imposes restraint upon itself for the sake of society. License imposes suffering upon society so that it may enjoy exclusive privileges. This is a Government of unbridled license because it is a Government whose chief, if not sole, aim is to exploit Indian society." 464

In his approach to the welfare of the individual, he did not recommend the use of force. He was for the Aristotelian golden mean - avoiding both the extremes of the application of force which is the feature of totalitarian regimes and of too much liberty. He believed, "the world will live in peace only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so." 465 He was against concentration of political power in a few hands and hence he came very near the ideas of Count Leo Tolstoy. The future of non-violence is not dark as Devdas Gandhi said, "I do not agree that the future is dark. Who but a prophet can speak with confidence of the future? The present is admittedly dark. But the future should be bright if we work for the ideas for which Bapu lived and died...." 466 So the significance of Gandhi's concept of non-violence is that it did not oppose any political creed but tried to evolve a new line in political thinking after happily blending the different political concepts.

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464. Young India, May 1, 1930, p.152.

465. M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, p.70.  
(Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1950)

466. Homer A. Jack, ed., The Gandhi Reader, p.473.  
(Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1956)

Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violence hovers on the peripheries of socialism, anarchism, pluralism, democracy etc. - all at the same time but as a matter of fact it is none of them. It took something from everything but had an originality - all its own. From socialism it took the idea of the welfare of the individual but emphasized non-violence. Then again, when he did not want the state, he was not an anarchist, working for chaos. His non-violence gives importance to the development of the individual liberty and personality. He thought of a society which would be predominantly non-violent. It is difficult indeed to have an absolutely non-violent and stateless society. It might appear that Gandhi did not succeed completely in his non-violence because still the world is not doing what is right yet it is a fact also that the vast majority of the people do recognize the worth of the right action and they feel that only that which is right should be done. That is why Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is still relevant today when man earnestly feels that there should be justice in the state and world-society.

The old order in India is giving place to new and it appears that in this craze for the new Gandhism is apt to be forgotten. Of course, in September 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru, the de facto Prime Minister of the Interim or Provisional Government, broadcast to the country, "India is on the move and the old order passes. Too long have we been passive spectators of events, the play things of others. The initiative comes to our people now and we shall make the history of our choice...."467 Gandhi was violently assassinated but his spiritual assassination is continuing in the Indian society where the

467. Kanwar Lal, *Good Bye Mr. Gandhi*, p.265.  
(Arts And Letters, Delhi, 1969)

politicians shout from the house tops about their faith in Gandhian secularism and non-violence but in their day to day conduct they do not touch even the outer limits of non-violence. Humanity, at present, appears to be going back to the state of nature where there is a perpetual atmosphere of hatred, jealousy and war. Man is getting restive and appalled by the rapid developments in the scientific means of destruction. He is eager for a change and it will be better if the peaceful means, advocated by Gandhi and incorporated in its charter by the UN are made use of.

Gandhi's non-violence is significant because if it is opted as a political course by the people in the present, their future will be bright. Gandhi performed his noble duty because his concept of non-violence has brought the world nearer peace and brotherhood of mankind. Now it is for the leading statesmen of the world to choose the right path. "No past civilization has been confronted with a comparable challenge. None has ever succeeded in meeting successfully the lesser challenges with which it was faced in its twilight time. That modern man can rise above precedent and transcend his legacies of fear, hate and greed through a spiritual rebirth and a renaissance of creative statesmanship is by no means certain. If he cannot, his frustration will almost surely mean in more than a symbolic sense, the breaking of the nations and the immolation of much of humanity in a new Armageddon. Should he succeed in saving his future, he faces a bright vista of hope and promise. Which choice is to be made is a question currently unanswerable...they must now choose between two roads. One leads to anarchy, to violence, and to death. The other leads to Government, to peace and to life." 468

If Gandhian non-violence is not used in individual, national, and international relations, the following passage from James Hilton's novel 'Lost Horizon', quoted by the late President Roosevelt in his Chicago address of October 5, 1937, will become meaningful. "Men, exultant in the technique of homicide will rage so hotly over the world that every precious thing will be in danger, every book and picture and harmony, every treasure garnered through two millenniums, the small, the delicate, the defenseless—all will be lost or wrecked or utterly destroyed... There will be no safety by arms, no help from authority, no answer in science. The storm will rage until every flower of culture is trampled and all human beings are leveled in a vast chaos." 469

The people should try to emulate the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and not merely mourn the passing away of such a leader because, "...he would chide us if we merely mourn. That is a poor way of doing homage to him. The only way is to express our determination, to pledge ourselves anew, to conduct ourselves so and to dedicate ourselves to the great task which he under-took and which he accomplished to such a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice and thus prove to some extent at least worthy followers of his...." 470

It will not be too much to mention that Gandhi, in his concept of non-violence or Ahimsa, propounded one of the greatest political philosophies. He wrote, "Ahimsa is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself

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469. Frederick L. Schuman, International Politics, p.958.

470. Homer A. Jack, The Gandhi Reader, p.495.

may die to vindicate the ideal but Ahimsa will never die. And the gospel of Ahimsa can be spread only through believers dying for the cause."<sup>471</sup> As a matter of fact Gandhi's message of non-violence is for the whole world. He said, "If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are, indeed, in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily growing number of men and women in the west."<sup>472</sup>

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471. Harlan, May 19, 1946, p.140.

472. M.K. Gandhi, All Men Are Brothers, p.180.  
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Section B - Works by other authors.

Section C - Magazines and Journals.

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