



“GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY” :
**“ A SPINNING WHEEL TO CREAT A BALANCE
BETWEEN MATERIALISM AND
SPIRITUALISM ”**

*Minor Research Project submitted at U.G.C sponsored
“Gandhian Study centre”, A.D.P. College, Nagaon (Assam).*



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Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, better known as Mahatma ('Great Soul/Self'), is arguably the most admired human being of the twentieth-century. Not an academic philosopher, Gandhi was never concerned with abstract philosophical analysis. When asked ^{about} his philosophy, he typically responded, 'My life is my message.' And yet one could make a strong case that Gandhi is more philosophically interesting and significant than most professional philosophers.

Gandhi, like Socrates, was a gadfly, and he was often an embarrassment and an irritant, even to his friends and allies. He challenges unacknowledged assumptions and uncritically accepted positions and allows us to envision different ways of seeing things. He explodes myths and arrogant provincialism and challenges power positions that pretend to be based on sound knowledge and morality.

Best known as a proponent of nonviolence (ahimsa), Gandhi challenges our analysis of violence and nonviolence. Violence and nonviolence, for Gandhi, include overt physical acts, but they include so much more.

As with Kant and many other philosophers, Gandhi focuses much of his attention on motives and intentions. Violence is often equated with hatred, and nonviolence with love. However, Gandhi goes beyond most philosophical analysis by focusing on the violence of the status quo: economic violence, cultural violence, psychological violence, linguistic violence, and so forth. For Gandhi, if I am accumulating wealth and power, and my neighbour is in great need, and I do nothing to help alleviate the suffering of the other, then I contribute to and am complicit in the violence of the status quo.

Unlike most philosophers, Gandhi, like Levinas, emphasises the primacy of morality. Gandhi has little sympathy for detached theories of

knowledge that are not grounded in morality, or for theology and metaphysics which pretend to transcend morality.

In his approach to morality in general and violence in particular, Gandhi is well known for his emphasis on the integral, mutually reinforcing relationship between means and ends. One cannot use impure or immoral means to achieve worthy goals. This is the major reason he rejects utilitarianism. Although there may be short-term desired results, violent immoral means inevitably lead to defective ends. We fuel and become trapped in endless escalating cycles of violence and mutual destruction.

Gandhi's approach expresses an activist philosophy, which he often relates to the action-oriented philosophy of karma yoga in the Bhagavad-Gita: Act to fulfil your ethical duties with an attitude of nonattachment to the results of your actions. In this way, Gandhi experimented with ways to intervene nonviolently to weaken endless cycles of violence and mutual destruction and allow us to realise ethical goals.

Although Gandhi's emphasis on intentions and duties often allows us to relate him to Kant, he is not really a Kantian. First, Gandhi describes himself as a 'pragmatic idealist'. He focuses on results. When he acted with good intentions and according to moral duty, but did not succeed in resisting hegemonic British imperialism, alleviating poverty and suffering, or overcoming caste prejudice and oppression, he evaluated his position as a 'failed experiment in truth'.

Second, Gandhi opposes any abstract, formalistic, universal, decontextualised approach which is then applied to particular situations. Gandhi contextualises his analysis and is always experimenting with an open-ended truth reflecting imperfect understanding.

In this regard, Gandhi presents views that are relevant to recent philosophical developments regarding pragmatism, phenomenology and

hermeneutics, relativism, anti-essentialism, and postmodernism. How do we deal with the inadequate dichotomy of universal, absolute essentialism versus particular, relative anti-essentialism? Gandhi, avoiding a kind of facile relativism, embraces absolute universals, such as nonviolence, truth and the unity of all life. But Gandhi also maintains that as particular, relative, embodied human beings, none of us fully comprehends the absolute. The unity is always a unity with particular differences. The absolute may serve as a regulative ideal, but at most we have 'glimpses' of truth that is always relative.

Therefore, we should be tolerant of the other, who has truths that we do not have, and we should realise that the movement toward greater truth is an action-oriented, cooperative, mutually reinforcing effort. This philosophical approach to truth necessarily involves dialogue, recognition of integral self-other relations, and embracing an open-ended process that resists the domination of false attempts at philosophical, religious, cultural, economic, or political closure.

2. Philosophy of religion

2.1 A definition :

Philosophy of religion is a branch of philosophy that asks questions about religion. As with all philosophies, the topics at hand are generated by those who participate. In the philosophy of religion, these may include but are not limited to the nature and existence of God, religious language, miracles, prayer, the problem of evil, and how religion and other value-systems such as ethics interrelate. Religious philosophy, on the other hand, is the philosophical thinking that is inspired and directed by religion, such as Christian philosophy and Islamic philosophy. As an alternative, philosophy of religion is the philosophical thinking about religion. It is designed such that it can be carried out dispassionately by what are thought of as those in two "camps": adherents or believers, and non-believers.

2.2 History :

Prescientific theories have been proposed since presocratic times. Herodotus (484 – 425 BCE) stated that the gods of Greece were the same as the gods of Egypt. Euhemerus (appr. 330– 264 BCE) wrote that gods were excellent historical persons who eventually became worshiped.

Theorizing beyond mere speculation became possible after data from tribes and peoples all over the world became available in Europe and the United States in the 18th and 19th century. The founder of the scientific study of religion is generally considered to be Max Müller (1823 – 1900), who advocated comparative religion. Later serious doubts were raised,

among others by Geertz about the question whether it is possible to provide a general theory of all religions.

2.3 Scope and classifications :

This article only treats influential theories about religion that are open for empirical verification or falsifications i.e (attempts to) scientific theories. This means that most religious views will not be treated here.

Theories of religion can be classified into.

- **Substantive (or essentialist) theories that focus on the contents of religions and the meaning the contents has for people. This approach asserts that people have faith because beliefs make sense to them. The theories by Tylor and Frazer, Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade are examples substantive theories.**
- **Functional (and in a stronger form reductionist) theories that focuses on the social or psychological functions that religion has for a group or a person. This approach tends to focus more on the subconscious motives why people have beliefs that are irrational. Theories by Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Émile Durkheim, and the theory by Stark and Bainbridge are examples of functional theories. This approach tends to be static, with the exception of Marx' theory, and unlike e.g. Weber's approach that treats the interaction and dynamic processes between religions and the rest of societies.**

Other ways in which theories or descriptions of religions can be classified are.

- **Insider versus outsider perspectives (roughly corresponding to emic versus etic descriptions)**
- **Individualist versus social views**
- **Evolutionist versus relativist views**

Gandhian Philosophy

2.4 Gandhism :

Gandhism (or Gandhianism) is a collection of inspirations, principles, beliefs and philosophy of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as Mahatma Gandhi), who was a major political and spiritual leader of India and the Indian Independence Movement.

It is a body of ideas and principles that describes the inspiration, vision and the life work of Gandhi. The term also encompasses what Gandhi's ideas, words and actions mean to people around the world, and how they used them for guidance in building their own future. Gandhism also permeates into the realm of the individual human being, non-political and non-social. A Gandhian can mean either an individual who follows, or a specific philosophy which is attributed to, Gandhism.

Talking about "Gandhism" Gandhi had said "There is no such thing as 'Gandhism', and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems." He said "The opinions I have formed and the conclusions I have arrived at are not final. I may change them tomorrow." "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills." he added.

Eminent scholar, Professor Ramjee Singh has called Mahatma Gandhi as the Bodhisattva of the twentieth century.

2.5 Gandhian Religion :

**"The world is my country.
All mankind are my brethren
And to do good is my religion."**

- M. K. Gandhi.

Ahimsa, peace and non-aggression are the hallmarks of Gandhian Doctrine. Many years have gone by but the luster of the Gandhian Religion remains undimmed. Invading forces have descended on India but Gandhi's ideals have remained indestructible.

The Gandhian religion is not merely for Hindus, not merely for India, but for the whole world. The Gandhian philosophy is not only essential for the rebirth of the Indian nation but also for the re-education of the human race.

It is becoming clear that at this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only hope for mankind is Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence. The Gandhian doctrine, the ultimate realization must involve tolerance and understanding, peace and goodwill, and recognition of the immense variety of paths by which the soul can fulfill its ultimate destiny.

The Gandhian religion, which is primarily concerned with spiritual development, is of special significance in our age, which is marked by the obsolescence of the materialistic civilization. In fact, Gandhi laid the foundation of mathematical and scientific knowledge. They measured both time and space. Let us look at some of basic conclusions reached by ancient insights, which have become the fundamentals of the modern Gandhian Philosophy. Gandhiji perceived the principle more clearly and understood its implications even more deeply. The virtues of

self-discipline, self restraint and self-development which are the mainstay of Indian Dharma and Gandhi culture, are as fully relevant today as they were many years ago. Therefore we must go all out to preserve the Gandhian religion., In fact, Gandhi was a great soul who preached the essential unity of all religions and the basic unity of all humanity. In recent times unity has been sought to be undermined by forces, internal as well as external out to destabilize us. So it is now time for India to show the world that we are one as a society, are too secure in our spiritual strength and national heritage to be so easily uprooted. This is a gigantic task but we have not shirked it.

In India we are a highly religious society, wholly secular in character. Gandhi was deeply religious person but he was clear in mind that the state should be secular- He stood for the maximum possible distance between religious concerns of individuals and the state's obligations towards its citizens. Gandhi also clearly stated that secularism did not mean opposition to religion. He also said that the state had to honour all religions equally without attaching itself to a particular faith.

Strange as it may seem, there is a religious essence at the core of secularism and even the modern secular West has recognized it. In Europe it has permeated all spheres of life, and even the French speak of there being something eternal about religion as the basis of life. It has been universally accepted that secularism is not a denial of religion. On the contrary it means tolerance and respect for all religions- what one can call- the hospitality of faiths.

Gandhi's religious quest for truth had no geographical limits. His political activities were but an avocation to his religious mission. The centre- most point of Gandhi's religious philosophy is the inviolable sacredness of life and the consequent sinfulness of bloodshed. "Since we have no power to create, we have no power to destroy", was his belief. Gandhi taught us, learning in the quest for national integration- is the crying need of the hour. Thus both as an ideology and as a policy,

Gandhian religion acquired worldwide acceptance. Along with Mahatma Gandhi, other Indian leaders also contributed to strengthening of the secular spirit of India.

Hindu Universalism denotes the ideology that all religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect. It was articulated by Gandhi :

"After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that all religions are true; all religions have some error in them; all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible."

Gandhi believed that at the core of every religion was truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsa) and the Golden Rule. He was deeply influenced by the Christian teaching of "turning the other cheek", once stating that if Christianity practised the Sermon on the Mount, he would indeed be a Christian. Gandhi felt that one should be aware of worshipping the symbols and idols of the religion and not its teachings, such as worshipping the crucifix whilst ignoring its significance as a symbol for self-sacrifice.

Although Gandhi was raised as a Hindu he was critical of most religions, including Hinduism. He wrote in his autobiography:

"Thus if I could not accept Christianity either as a perfect, or the greatest religion, neither was I then convinced of Hinduism being such. Hindu defects were pressingly visible to me. If untouchability could be a part of Hinduism, it could but be a rotten part or an excrescence. I could not understand the raison d'etre of a multitude of sects and castes. What was the meaning of saying that the Vedas were the inspired Word of God? If they were inspired, why not also the Bible and the Koran? As Christian

friends were endeavouring to convert me, so were Muslim friends. Abdullah Sheth had kept on inducing me to study Islam, and of course he had always something to say regarding its beauty".

He then went on to say:

"As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion over-riding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel or incontinent and claim to have God on his side".

Gandhi was critical of the hypocrisy in organised religion, rather than the principles on which they were based. He also said the following about Hinduism:

"Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being... When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad 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 of tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita".

The concept of Islamic jihad can also be taken to mean a nonviolent struggle or satyagraha, in the way Gandhi practiced it. On Islam he said:

"The sayings of Muhammad are a treasure of wisdom, not only for Muslims but for all of mankind". Later in his life when he was asked whether he was a Hindu, he replied:

"Yes I am. I am also a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist and a Jew". Gandhi's religious views are reflected in the hymns his group often sang:

- **Vaishnav jan to Call them Vishnava, those who understand the sufferings of others...**
- **Ragupati Raghava Raja Ram Call him Rama or God or Allah...**

Remarks :

The three basic factors militating against translation of the ideal of human unity into action are religion, nationalistic politics and economic ideologies. Religions are different roads converging to the same destination. Mahatma Gandhi said, " The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of different religions. We want to reach not the dead level but unity in diversity. The soul of all religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time".

People representing a variety of cultures, languages, and creeds have to be woven into one nation, one people, free of communal or religious divides, free of conflict, devoted to the building up of a climate of confidence and co-operation. This is indeed a big task and we need all the patience and perseverance if we have to accomplish it. We have been able to absorb the shocks of history because of our deeply ingrained spiritual qualities, and we must have faith that the same spiritual will help us overcome the current crises. We are in a much better situation than, say, Britain with its Ireland and Scotland problem, Canada with its Quebec problem, Spain with its Basque problem as well as several countries in Africa and West Asia where the old creed of fundamentalism, now coupled with the new creed of ethnicity is challenging the concept of nationalism.

Can we face the challenge of Gandhi's ideals and ideas? They have not yet been fully utilized. The revolutionary Gandhi, who was far ahead of his times, has not been fully understood by the younger generation. Gandhi's thoughts need to be disseminated amongst our youth. It is the ideas, which have a stupendous role in taking the human society forward; towards the desired goal.

2.6 Satyagraha :

Satyagraha is formed by two Sanskrit words Satya (truth) and Agraha (holding firmly to). The term was popularized during the Indian Independence Movement, and is used in many Indian languages including Hindi.

Satya :

The pivotal and defining element of Gandhism is satya, a Sanskrit word usually translated into English as truth, whose literal meaning is 'what actually is' (deriving from the root verh as meaning 'to be'). The principle of Satya as espoused by Gandhi needed that Truth must pervade all considerations of politics, ego, society and convention. Gandhi did not consider himself to be a pacifist, socialist or on any definable spectrum of politics. He professed to adhere to the pure, existing facts of life to make his decisions.

Gandhi's commitments to non-violence, human freedom, equality and justice arose from his personal examination.

Truth is interpreted subjectively. Gandhism does not demand that its adherents agree to Gandhi's own principles to the letter, but in spirit. If one honestly believes that violence is sometimes necessary, it is truthful to believe in it. When Gandhi returned to India in the middle of World War I, he said he would have supported the British in the war. It would have been wrong, according to Gandhi, to demand equal rights for Indians in the Empire, and not contribute to its defence. On the other hand, by the time of the advance of the Japanese in World War II, Gandhi had given up notions of fighting alongside the British and argued for nonviolence instead. Gandhi developed a way of life by his constant "experimenting with truth" — a phrase that formed the subtitle to his autobiography. He

was prepared to learn through trial and error, often admitting to mistakes and changing his behaviour accordingly. This was particularly notable when Gandhi stopped all nationwide civil resistance in 1922 after the Chauri Chaura incident. He would forsake political independence for truth — believing that Indians should not become murderers and commit the very evils they were accusing the British of perpetrating in India. Gandhism is more about the spirit of Gandhi's journey to discover the truth, than what he finally considered to be the truth. It is the foundation of Gandhi's teachings, and the spirit of his whole life to examine and understand for oneself, and not take anybody or any ideology for granted.

Gandhi said: "The Truth is far more powerful than any weapon of mass destruction."

Gandhi's philosophy encompassed ontology and its association with truth. For Gandhi, "to be" did not mean to exist within the realm of time, as it has in the past with the Greek philosophers. But rather, "to exist" meant to exist within the realm of truth, or to use the term Gandhi did, satya. Gandhi summarized his beliefs first when he said "God is Truth", which his experimenting later prompted him to change to "Truth is God". The first statement seemed insufficient to Gandhi, as the mistake could be made that Gandhi was using truth as a description of God, as opposed to God as an aspect of satya. Satya (truth) in Gandhi's philosophy is God. It shares all the characteristics of the Hindu concept of God, or Brahman, and is believed by Gandhians to live within each person as their conscience while at the same time guiding the universe.

2.7 Gandhiji's selections :

Gandhiji says.....

2.8 True Religion :

You must watch my life, how I live, eat, sit, talk, behave in general. The sum total of all those in me is my religion.

There is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness.

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too treat in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.

True Morality :

True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it. No action which is not voluntary can be called moral. So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously and as a matter of duty. Any action that is dictated by fear or by coercion of any kind ceases to be moral. It also follows that all good deeds that are prompted by hope of happiness in the next world cease to be moral.

2.9 Religion and Morality :

1) True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil.

2) I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality. I tolerate unreasonable religious sentiment when it is not immoral.

3) 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 and incontinent and claim to have God on his side.

4) Our desires and motives may be divided into two classes—selfish and unselfish. All selfish desires are immoral, while the desire to improve ourselves for the sake of doing good to others is truly moral. The highest moral law is that we should unremittingly work for the good of mankind.

2.10 Religion and Practical Affairs :

Swaraj is synonymous with Rama Raj—the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness on earth.

Hanuman tore open his heart and showed that there was nothing there but Ramanama. I have none of the power of Hanuman to tear open my heart, but if any of you feel inclined to do it I assure you will find nothing there but love for Rama whom I see face to face in the starving millions of India.

Religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion. And that is why I am putting a religious matter before you in a practical form.

If any action of mine claimed to be spiritual is proved to be unpractical it must be pronounced to be a failure. I do believe that the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term.

Q. In your autobiography you have said that you cannot think of politics apart from religion. Do you still hold that view? If so, how is it that in a country of many diverse religions like India you expect a common political policy to be adopted? Yes, I still hold the view that I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed religion should evade

every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.

To practice nonviolence in mundane matters is to know its true value. It is to bring heaven upon earth. There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'. As Jeans has demonstrated, the whole universe including the most distant stars, invisible even through the most powerful telescope in the world, is compressed in an atom. I hold it therefore to be wrong to limit the use of nonviolence to cave-dwellers and for acquiring merit for a favored position in the other world. All virtue ceases to have use if it serves no purpose in every walk of life.

2.11 The various Religious creeds :

Religions are different roads converging to the same pint. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals.

If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too.

so long as there are different religions, every one of them may need some distinctive symbol. But when the symbol is made into a fetish and an instrument of proving the superiority of one's religion over other's it is fit only to be discarded.

2.12 Missionary effort and the State :

The State should undoubtedly be secular. Everyone living in it should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance, so long as the

citizen obeyed the common law of the land. There should be no interference with missionary effort, but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the State as it did during the foreign regime.

'If I were a dictator, religion and State would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it,' remarked Gandhiji sometime back in answer to a question by a missionary friend who asked whether in Free India there would be complete religious freedom and whether religion will be separate from the State. 'The State would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern.' He then went on to describe his conception of religion. 'You must watch my life, how I live, eat, sit, talk, behave in general. The sum total of all those in me is my religion,' he said.

2.13 Tolerance :

I do not like the word tolerance, but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter. This admission will be readily made by a seeker of Truth, who follows the law of Love. If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but have become one with God, for truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God. Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and reinterpretation. Progress towards Truth, towards God, is possible only because of such

evolution. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. All faiths constitute a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect, and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faith also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome those defects. Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty, to blend into our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths.

Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect. Imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held to be the right one? Everybody is right from his own standpoint, but it is not possible that everybody is wrong. Hence the necessity of tolerance, which does not mean indifference to one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight, which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith.

There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions and that is that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions. For instance, if one wants to study the Bhagavata, one should do so not through a translation of it made by a hostile critic but one prepared by a lover of the Bhagavata. Similarly to study the Bible one should study it through the commentaries of devoted Christians. This study of other religions besides one's own will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of the universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths'. Let no one even for a moment entertain the fear that a reverent study of other

religions is likely to weaken or shake one's faith in one's own. The Hindu system of philosophy regards all religions as containing the elements of truth in them and enjoins an attitude of respect and reverence towards them all. This of course presupposes regard for one's own religion. Study and appreciation of other religions need not cause a weakening of that regard; it should mean extension of that regard to other religions. Religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.

2.14 Gandhiji's Personal Attitude :

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible. The aim of the Fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Muslim to become a better Muslim, and a Christian a better Christian. The attitude of patronizing toleration is false to the spirit of International Fellowship. If I have a suspicion in my mind that my religion is more or less true, and that others' are more or less false, instead of being more or less true, then, though I may have some sort of fellowship with them, it is of an entirely different kind from the one we need in the International Fellowship. Our prayer for other must be NOT 'God, give him the light that Thou has given me, ' BUT'

Give him all the light and truth he needs for his highest development.' Pray merely that your friends may become better men, whatever their

form of religion. Nevertheless, your experience may become a part of their experience, without your knowing it.

2.15 The Acid Test :

I would reject all authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or the dictates of the heart. Authority sustains and ennobles the weak when it is the handiwork of reason, but it degrades them when it supplants reason sanctified by the still small voice within.

Scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth. They are intended to purify reason and illuminate truth.

Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world.

An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.

I do not hold that everything ancient is good because it is ancient. I do not advocate surrender of God-given reasoning faculty in the face of dancing tradition. Any tradition, however ancient, if inconsistent with morality, is fit to be banished from the land. Untouchability may be considered to be an ancient tradition, the institution of child widowhood and child marriage may be considered to be an ancient tradition, and even so many an ancient horrible belief and superstitious practice. I would sweep them out of existence if I had the power. When, therefore, I talk of respecting the ancient tradition, you now understand what I mean.

We should cease to grow the moment we cease to discriminate between virtue and vice, and slavishly copy the past which we do not fully know. We are proud heirs to all that was noblest and best in the bygone age. We must not dishonor our heritage by multiplying past errors. Intolerance of criticism even of what one may prize as life itself is not conducive to the growth of public corporate life.

On Hinduism,

I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana of Tulsidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. I know the vice that is going on today in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things in Hinduism.

Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay, and subject to the laws of nature. One and indivisible at the root, it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. The changes in the seasons affect it. It has its autumn and summer, its winter and spring. The rains nourish and fructify it too. Hinduism is like the Ganges, pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect.

2.16 GURUVADA :

I believe in the Hindu theory of guru and its importance in spiritual realization. I think there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that true knowledge is impossible without a guru. An imperfect teacher in mundane affairs may be tolerable, but not so in spiritual matters. Only a perfect gnanee (a knowing one, a seer) deserves to be enthroned as guru. I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as gurus. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who 'knows not that he knows not'.

IDOL WORSHIP :

I do not disbelieve in idol worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism. Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Did it in any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism? Personally, he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also so, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not mosques or churches in reality the same as mandirs? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Mussulman, Gandhiji's advice was if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship.

2.17 BELIEF IN THE HEREDITARY TRANSMISSIBILITY OF CHARACTER :

Children inherit the qualities of the parents, no less than their physical features. Environment does play an important part, but the original capital on which a child starts in life is inherited from its ancestors. I believe that just as every one inherits a particular form so does he inherit the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors, and to make this admission is to conserve one's energy. That frank

admission, if he will act up to it, would put a legitimate curb upon our ambitions, and thereby our energy is set free for extending the field of spiritual research and spiritual evolution. It is this doctrine of Varnashrama Dharma which I have always adopted.

VARNA :

I regard Varnashrama as a healthy division of work based on birth. The present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority. It is purely a question of duty. I have indeed stated that varna is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a shudra, for instance, to become a vaishya. But in order to perform the duty of a vaishya he does not need the label of a vaishya. He who performs the duty of a Brahman will easily become one in the next incarnation.

So far as I know anything at all of Hinduism, the meaning of varna is incredibly simple. It simply means the following on the part of us all the hereditary calling of our forefathers, in so far as that traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood. You will realize that if all of us follow this law of varna we would limit our material ambition, and our energy would be set free for exploring those vast fields whereby and where through we can know God.

Varnashrama Dharma 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. It restricts him therefore, for the purpose of holding body and soul together, to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is Varnashrama Dharma.

Numerous verses from the shastras unmistakably show that mere birth counts for nothing. A person must show corresponding works and character to establish his claim by birth. Such verses also enforce the argument that

- (i) a person loses varna by failing to exhibit its peculiar characteristics;
- (ii) inter-varna marriage or interdining, whatever virtue the restrictions on them may have, does not affect a person's varna, at least not so much as the failing to live up to one's varna;
- (iii) birth, while it gives a start and enables the parents to determine the training and occupation of their children, does not perpetuate the varna of one's birth, if it is not fulfilled by works.

2.18 CASTE AS VARNA :

Our existing caste organizations are really trade guilds.

From the economic point of view, its value was once very great. It ensured hereditary skill; it limited competition. It was the best remedy against pauperism. And it had all the advantages of trade guilds.

Although it did not foster adventure or invention there, it is not known to have come in the way either.

Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment or social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a heaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and greed.

The vast organization of caste answered not only the religious wants of the community but it answered its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation that was capable of producing the caste system its wonderful power of organization. I believe that every man is

born in the world with certain natural tendencies. Every person is born with certain definite limitations which he cannot overcome. From a careful observation of those limitations the law of varna was deduced. It establishes certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. Whilst recognizing limitations the law of varna admitted of no distinctions of high and low; on the one hand it guaranteed to each the fruits of his labours and on the other it prevented him from pressing upon his neighbour. This great law has been degraded and fallen into disrepute. But 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.

Q. Do you not think that in ancient India there was much difference in economic status and social privileges between the four varnas?

A. That may be historically true. But misapplication or an imperfect understanding of the law must not lead to the ignoring of the law itself. By constant striving we have to enrich the inheritance left to us. This law determines the duties of man. Rights follow from a due performance of duties.

CASTE IN SO FAR AS IT IS DIFFERENT FROM VARNA :

I consider the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural, and essential. The innumerable subcastes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion the better.

The existing innumerable divisions with the attendant artificial restrictions and elaborate ceremonial are harmful to the growth of a religious spirit, as also to the social well-being of the Hindus and therefore also their neighbours. Varnashrama of the shastras is today non-existent in practice. The present caste system is the very

antithesis of varna-shrama. The sooner public opinion abolishes it the better.

Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is harmful both to spiritual and national growth.

Today Brahmans and kshatriyas, vaishyas and shudras are mere labels. There is utter confusion of varna as I understand it and I wish that all the Hindus will voluntarily call themselves shudras. That is the only way to demonstrate the truth of Brahmanism and to revive Varna Dharma in its true state.

2.19 UNTOUCHABILITY :

Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to untouchability. It has degraded us, made us pariahs. Even the Mussalman have caught the sinful contagion from us.

The 'touch-me-not'-ism that disfigures the present-day Hinduism is morbid growth. It only betrays a woodenness of mind, a blind self-conceit. It is abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality.

Untouchability is not only not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague, which it is the hallowed duty of every Hindu to combat. It has received religious sanction in India, and reduced lakhs and crores of human beings to a state bordering on slavery.

The observance (of the vow of the removal of untouchability) is not fulfilled, merely by making friends with 'untouchables', but by loving all life as one's own self. Removal of untouchability means love for, and service of, the whole world, and it thus merges into ahimsa. I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings, and affronts leveled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition. I, therefore, pray that if I should be

horn again, I should do so not as a Brahmins, kshatriya, vaishya or shudra, hut as an atishudra.

2.20 REINTERPRETATION OF TERMS :

As the world progresses the same terms acquire new values.

I have come to feel that like human beings words have their evolution from stage to stage in the contents they hold. For instance, the contents

of the richest word—God—are not the same to every lone of us. They will vary with the experience of each. Yajna is a word full of beauty and power. Hence with the growth of knowledge and experience and with the change of time, its meaning is likely to grow and change. Yajna literally means worship; hence sacrifice; hence any sacrificial act or any act of service. And in this sense every age may and should have its own particular Yajna. The principles of religion are one thing, and practices based on them are another. The principles are absolute and irrespective of space and time. Practices change with place and time.

'*Satyam bruyat priyam bruyat ma bruyat satyam apriyam*': -In my opinion the Sanskrit text means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it, if one cannot do so in a gentle way; meaning thereby that there is not truth in a man who cannot control his tongue.

RELIGION :

- The root meaning of all religion is 'that which binds'. The root meaning of its Sanskrit equivalent dharma is 'that which holds'. It sustains a person as nothing else does.

Harijan: Jan. 26, 1934.

- Religion binds man to God and man to man.

Harijan: May 4, 1940.

- Religion is no religion, if it becomes mechanical.

Bapu-Ke-Ashirvad: Sept. 23, 1945.

- Religion does not consist in eating this food or eschewing that, but only in the realization of God, within ourself.

Bapu-Ke-Asbirvad: Oct. 26, 1945.

RELIGIONS :

- If all religions are one at source, we have to synthesize them. Today, they are looked upon as separate and that is why we kill each other.

Harijan: Sept. 22, 1946.

- If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too. There is only one God, but there are many paths to Him.

3. Morality

3.1 A definition :

Morality (from the Latin *moralitas* "manner, character, proper behavior") has three principal meanings.

In its first, descriptive usage, morality means a code of conduct or belief which is held to be authoritative in matters of right and wrong. Morals are arbitrarily created and subjectively defined by society, philosophy, religion, and/or individual conscience. An example of the descriptive usage could be "common conceptions of morality have changed significantly over time." The arbitrariness of morality stems from the observation that actions that may be deemed moral in one culture in time may not be classified as such in others or in a different time. The subjectiveness of morality is shown by the observation that actions or beliefs which by themselves do not cause any harm may be by some considered immoral, e.g. marrying someone of same gender, being an atheist, etc. Descriptive morality does not explain why anything should be considered immoral, only that it may be classified so. While for the most part immoral acts are classified as such because they cause harm, this is not by any means an all encompassing criterion. Many acts or beliefs are often then classified as such because of prejudice, ignorance or even hatred.

In its second, normative and universal sense, morality refers to an ideal code of belief and conduct, one which would be espoused in preference to other alternatives by the same "moral" person, under specified conditions. In this "prescriptive" sense, moral value judgments such as "murder is immoral" are made. While descriptive morality would not necessarily disagree that "murder is immoral", it would nevertheless propose that murder is immoral only because we so thought. A refined adherence to

this latter position is known as moral skepticism, in which the unchanging existence of a rigid agreed by all objective moral "truth" is rejected.

In its third usage, 'morality' is synonymous with ethics. Ethics is the systematic philosophical study of the moral domain. Ethics seeks to address questions such as how a moral outcome can be achieved in a specific situation (applied ethics), how moral values should be determined (normative ethics), what morals people actually abide by (descriptive ethics), what the fundamental nature of ethics or morality is, including whether it has any objective justification (meta-ethics), and how moral capacity or moral agency develops and what its nature is (moral psychology).

In applied ethics, for example, the prohibition against taking human life is controversial with respect to capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion and wars of invasion.

In normative ethics, a typical question might be whether a lie told for the sake of protecting someone from harm is justified.

In meta-ethics, a key issue is the meaning of the terms "right" or "wrong". Moral realism would hold that there are true moral statements which report objective moral facts, whereas moral anti-realism would hold that morality is derived from any one of the norms prevalent in society (cultural relativism); the edicts of a god (divine command theory); is merely an expression of the speakers' sentiments (emotivism); an implied imperative (prescriptive); falsely presupposes that there are objective moral facts (error theory). Some thinkers hold that there is no correct definition of right behavior, that morality can only be judged with respect to particular situations, within the standards of particular belief systems and socio-historical contexts. This position, known as moral relativism, often cites empirical evidence from anthropology as evidence to support its claims. The opposite view, that there are universal, eternal moral

truths are known as moral absolutism. Moral absolutists might concede that forces of social conformity significantly shape moral decisions, but deny that cultural norms and customs define morally right behavior.

3.2 Gandhi's 11 Vows

- Ahimsa (Nonviolence)
- Satya (Truth)
- Asteya (Non-stealing)
- Brahmacharya (Self Discipline)
- Aparigraha (Non-possession)
- Sharirshrama (Bread Labour)
- Aswada (Control of the Palate)
- Sarvatra Bhayavarjana (Fearlessness)
- Sarva Dharma Samantva (Equality of the religions)
- Swadeshi (Use Locally Made Goods)
- Sparshbhavna (Untouchability)

3.2.1 Ahimsa (Nonviolence)

Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness, but it is positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer.

Ahimsa is a weapon of matchless potency. It is the summum bonum of life. It is an attribute of the brave, in fact, it is their all. It does not come within the reach of coward. It is no wooden or lifeless dogma, but a living and life giving force. Ahimsa is not the way of the timid or cowardly. It is

the way of the brave ready to face death. He who holds sword in hand is no doubt brave; but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching, is braver.

3.2.2 Satya (Truth)

Truth has no form. Therefore everyone will form such an idea or image of Truth as appeals to him, and there will be as many images of Truth as there are men. These will be true as long as they last. For they enable a man to obtain everything he wants. - Diary of Mahadevhai, Truth should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action. To the man who has realised this Truth in its fulness, nothing else remains to be known, because all knowledge is necessarily included in it. What is not included in it, is not truth and so not true knowledge.

3.2.3 Asteya (Non-stealing)

Non-stealing does not mean merely not to steal. To keep or take anything which one does not need is also stealing. And of course, stealing is fraught with violence.

We are not always aware of our real needs, and most of us improperly multiply our wants and thus, unconsciously, make thieves of ourselves. One who follows the observance of Non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of his own wants. Much of the distressing poverty in this world has risen out of the breach of the principle of Non-stealing.-
From Yeravda Mandir,

3.2.4 Brahmacharya (Self Discipline)

Brahmacharya means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ, and allows all the others free play is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see

suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and at the same time to expect to control the only remaining organ, is like putting one's hands in the fire and expecting to escape being burnt.

3.2.5 Aparigraha (Non-possession)

Non possession means that we should not hoard anything that we do not need today.

The less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for your enjoyment of this life but for enjoyment of personal service to your fellow beings; service to which you dedicate yourself, body, soul and mind.

When you dispossess yourself of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world. In other words, you really get all that is in reality necessary for you, everything. If the food is necessary, food will come to you.

3.2.6 Sharirshrama (Bread Labour)

Earn thy bread by the sweat of the brow- says Bible. Bread labour means that everyone is expected to perform sufficient body-labour in order to entitle him to his living. It is not, therefore, necessary to earn one's living by bread labour, 'taking living' in its broader sense. But everyone must perform some useful body-labour.

The economics of Bread labour are the living way of life. It means that every man has to labour with his body for his food and clothing. If I can convince the people of the value and necessity of bread-labour, there never will be any want of bread and cloth.

The idea is that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food and his intellectual faculties must be exercised not in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune, but only in the service of mankind. If this

principle is observed everywhere, all men would be equal, none would starve and world would be saved from a sin.

3.2.7 Aswada (Control of the Palate)

Unless we are satisfied with foods that are necessary for the proper maintenance of our physical health, and unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating and exciting condiments that we mixed with food. We will certainly not be able to control the over-abundant, unnecessary, and exciting stimulation that we may have. If we do not do that, the result naturally is that we abuse ourselves, and become less than animals and brutes.

The diet should be healthy and well-balanced. The body was never meant to be treated as a refuse-bin. Food is meant to sustain the body.

3.2.8 Sarvatra Bhayavarjana (Fearlessness)

Fearlessness should connote absence of all kinds of fear - fear of death, fear of bodily injury, fear of hunger, fear of insults, fear of public disapprobation, fear of ghosts and evil spirits, fear of anyone's anger. Freedom from all these and other such fears constitute fearlessness.

Fearlessness does not mean arrogance and aggressiveness. That in itself is a sign of fear. Fearlessness presupposes calmness and peace of mind. For that it is necessary to have a living faith in God.

3.2.9 Sarva Dharma Samantva (Equality of the religions)

Religions have been interwoven. One sees a special quality in every one of them. But no one religion is higher than another. All are complimentary to one another. Since this is my belief, the speciality of any one religion cannot run counter to another, cannot be at variance with universally accepted principles. For I believe in the fundamental truth of all great

religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths we should find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

Just as men have different names and faces, these religions also are different. But just as men are all human in spite of their different names and forms, just as leaves of a tree though different as leaves are the same as the leaves of the same tree, all religions though different are the same. We must treat all religions as equals.

3.2.10 Swadeshi (Use Locally Made Goods)

Swadeshi is that spirit in us which requires us to serve our immediate neighbours before others, and to use things produced in our neighbourhood in preference to those more remote. So doing, we cannot serve humanity to the best of our capacity, we cannot serve humanity by neglecting our neighbours. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour.

It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour, the grain dealer starve for want of custom. Similarly, it is sinful for to wear the latest finery of Regent Street when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. My definition of Swadeshi is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything, however nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our

immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote & I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such Swadeshi, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. - Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi.

3.2.11 Sparshhavana (Untouchability)

Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons in reason of their birth in a particular state or family. It is an excrescence. In the guise of religion, it is always in the way, and erupts religion.

Removal of untouchability means love for, and service of, the whole world and thus merges into Ahimsa. Removal of untouchability spells the breaking down of barriers between man and man and between the various orders of Being. I consider untouchability to be a heinous crime against humanity. It is not a sign of self-restraint, but an arrogant assumption of superiority. .

3.11 The Bases of Satyagraha in Gandhi's Philosophy:

The term "satyagraha" was coined by Gandhi in South Africa to express the force that Indians there used. It was conceived as a weapon of the strong and excluded the use of violence and hatred in any shape or form. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to teach truth through nonviolent means. It literally means holding on to truth. So it is a truth-force. Gandhi calls it the soulforce.³ It can be used by individuals as well as communities. It is also a law of universal application. It is not based on the force of arms, but on the force of truth and love. We are usually aware of two kinds of

forces-physical force and spiritual force. We are generally acquainted with the physical force. It consists of violence. It is a weapon of the brutes. Man is more familiar with the physical force which Gandhi was opposed to. The spiritual force is an invisible one. So he described it as truth-force. Therefore, satyagraha pre-supposes self-discipline, self-discipline, self-control, and self-purification.

According to Gandhi, a Satyagrahi is a fearless person. He will never submit to any arbitrary action. He who has attained the Satyagrahi's state of mind will remain victorious under all conditions. So it is belief in the power of spirit, the power of truth, the power of love by which man can overcome evil through self-suffering and self-sacrifice. His Satyagraha related to two things; it enjoins upon man the duty to eradicate evil and, positively, it reminds him of his obligation to serve the community.

Satyagrah is a very powerful nonviolent method of direct action. A satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to satyagraha. He also uses it as his last weapon against injustice after having exhausted all other possibilities of persuasion and conciliation. It emphasizes four basic ideas: (i) it is essentially the use of soul-force, (ii) it eliminates the use of physical force. For him, the practice of Satyagraha was an evolving science. He preached and practiced it for over three decades. We know Satyagraha is still evolving gradually.

According to Gandhi, it is a philosophy of life. It is the religion by which he lived. It is also the religion where he wanted all men to live by it. The veteran Gandhian, Dr R.R. Diwakar, says: "Satyagraha is a new way of life. It has several features. For him, Truth and Nonviolence are as hills. But truth through nonviolence alone is really a new feature. Secondly, the application of this principle to every walk of life and all human

affairs, and to fight evil and injustice to establish truth and justice, is also one of the new features.

Satyagraha as a weapon of social control is eternal and creative. Its creativity is inherent in its basis of ahimsa and moral persuasion. The Satyagrahi would adopt satyagraha as a weapon and insist of truth being established. He resists all unjust authority and the source of evil. But the aim of Satyagraha is destruction of evil, not the evildoer; sin, not the sinner, whom actually a satyagrahi loves to liberate from the grip of evil or sin. A satyagrahi does not crave or indulge in for personal gain or glorification, or to humiliate anyone. The entire social life is impossible without satyagraha which is a true religion. It is not only employed against rulers and ruled, but also society and government. It is a practical philosophy. It is a weapon with a spiritual and ascetic temper. In fact, it is the soul force attainable by self-purification. It can be utilized in any situation to reach one's goal through nonviolent means. It implies adherence to truth and love. So also the term 'self-purification' signifies the need for a proper education to create such an attitude of mind.

It is a sin to suffer unjust behaviour at the hands of another person or organization or society. Hence he did not hesitate to carry on tireless crusade against injustice, both in South Africa and India. Therefore Satyagraha may be understood as a technique for resolving conflicts and a method for fighting evil. As has been explained by Joan V Bondurant: "Satyagraha became something more than a method of resistance to particular legal norms; it became an instrument of struggle for positive objectives and for fundamental change..."

According to Gandhi, Satyagraha is practicable in every situation. The satyagrahi becomes mentally strong by enduring physical suffering. In this context Gandhi wrote: "I see that Satyagraha is assured of divine

help, and that in testing a Satyagrahi, the creator imposes on him at every step only as much burden as he can bear". There are no limitations to self-sacrifice. It may stretch to the extent of imprisonment or even death. So great suffering is highly correlated to great relief. The suffering is undergone in the purest form of Satyagraha. There are different forms of satyagraha. These forms may be employed in a satyagraha campaign. These were most commonly employed during the freedom struggle in India under leadership of Gandhi. There are three forms of Satyagraha, namely: (a) non-cooperation, (b) civil disobedience, and (c) fasting.

Non-cooperation means renunciation of the benefits of a system with which we are associated. It involves voluntary suffering in the process of resisting evil. Secondly, it consists of civil disobedience which involves direct contravention of specific laws like non-payment of taxes and so on. The spirit of civil disobedience consists in defying all those laws which are considered unjust. It is an act of civility since it is opposed to all forms of violent and uncivilized behaviour. It is an act of civility since it is opposed to all forms of violent and uncivilized behaviour. It involves disobedience to the unjust. But, it involves obedience to a higher moral law, truth and justice. It advocates a civilized way of life. It opposes all uncivilized acts and violence. On the other hand, disobedience is to be civil. Finally, fasting is the most potent form of Satyagraha. It is suffering and self-inflicted. There is a distinction between satyagrahi fasting and duragrahi fasting. Fasting is the highest expression of the prayer of a pure and loving heart. It is a means of resisting injustice and converting the evil-doer. A living faith in God is indispensable. There is no room for lack of faith, anger, impatience or selfishness. These make the fast violent. Gandhi said: "...in addition to truth and nonviolence, a satyagrahi should have the confidence that God will grant him the 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, singlemindedness of purpose, and perfect calm must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these Qualities at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of ahimsa should undertake Satyagrahi fast", Thus these three important forms of satyagraha should act in the application of Satyagraha.

Philosophy is defined as the pursuit of truth. This is par excellence a succinct and sufficient definition of philosophy and accepted by all. Satyagraha is also relentless search for truth. So it is both truth-force and soul-force. We may observe in this 'truth', there is a great force in it, since Gandhi called it God. It can be used by individual as well as communities. It is also known as the law of universal application. But it is not based on the force of arms but force of truth and love.

The philosophy of satyagraha is a new way of life. For Gandhi, truth and nonviolence are as old as hills, whereas truth through nonviolence is really a new way of life. It is a weapon of social control and is eternal and creative. Its creativity is inherent in its basis of ahimsa and moral persuasion. The satyagrahi would adopt Satyagraha as a weapon and insist on truth being established. That is why he resists all unjust authority and source of evil.

3.12 Gandhi's Philosophy of Ahimsa and Its Application to Current Conflicts :

"The whole gamut of man's activities...constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide life, social, economic, political and purely religious, into watertight compartments..."

It clearly indicates that Mahatma Gandhi, influenced by Vedantic doctrine that 'all life is one', believes in the unity of human life; this unity is a synthetic whole and can neither be divided in spheres like social, religious, political, moral or ethical nor it can be distinguished in levels like individual or collective. What seem us to be separate segments are, in fact, different facets of human life; they are related to each other and act, react upon one another. The division of activities of human life into different compartments is artificial and it is completely far from the reality.

God or the Supreme Being, who is the Creator of all and called by different names, is the power behind the above unity; for Gandhi, He is also the 'Truth' and it is His voice within everyone that inspires to follow the vision of Truth, and that is possible only by complete realization of Ahimsa-the non-violence. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi taking God-the Supreme Being as the Creator of all; declares Him the Truth and the basis as well as the symbol of Unity; and it is Ahimsa-the non-violence, also one of the two sides of that very coin, of which Truth is the other side, that can be the only means to reach Truth or to recognize Him.

As Ahimsa-the non-violence is the only means to reach Truth; also it is one of the two sides of that very coin, of which Truth is the other side, i.e. it is equal to Truth, its role in practices of all walks of human life becomes most important.

4.1 Gandhi's Views On God

" My own experience has led me to the knowledge that the fullest life is impossible without an immovable belief in a Living Law in obedience to which the whole universe moves. A man without that faith is like a drop thrown out of the ocean bound to perish. Every drop in the ocean shares its majesty and has the honour of giving us the ozone of life."

4.1.1 God as Truth and Love :

There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. He feels that, though he does not see that. It is this unseen power that makes itself felt and yet defies proof, because it is so unlike all that he perceives throughout the existence of God to a limited extent. He said, "I have made the world's faith in God my own, and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that to describe faith as experience is to tamper with Truth, it may perhaps be more correct to say that I have no word for characterizing my belief in God" .

God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. To me God is Truth and Love, God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness, God is the source of light and life and yet. He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. He transcends speech and reason. He is a personal God to those who need His touch. He is purest essence. He simply Is to those who have faith. He is long suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the greatest democrat the world knows. He is the greatest tyrant ever known.

He considers that "God is Truth" . In his early youth he was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means

exhaustive. He says, "We believe-and I think it is the truth-that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us through many tongues we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And when I came to study Islam I found that Islam too had many names for God. I would say with those who say that God is Love, God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that thought God may be, God, God is Truth, above all. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description, I have come to the conclusion that for myself God is Truth. But two years ago, I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz. That God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to that conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth which began nearly fifty years ago. I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading also. I found, too, that love in the sense of never found a double meaning in connection with truth and not even the atheists had demurred to the necessity or power of truth. But in their passion for discovering truth the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God-from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say "God is Truth" I should say "Truth is God."

He disarmed the criticism of many a young man when he said that he is a truth-fearing man and not a God-fearing man by simply saying "Truth is God."

There are thus a number of difficulties in the way, no matter how you describe God. But the human mind is a limited thing and people have to labour under limitations when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp. And then we have another thing in Hindu philosophy, viz. God alone is and nothing else exists, and the same truth

you find emphasized and exemplified in the Kalima of Islam. There you find it clearly stated—that God alone is and nothing else exists. In fact the Sanskrit word for Truth is a word which literally means that which exists—Sat. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition—Truth is God—gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God the only inevitable means is Love, i.e. non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately means and end are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love. 'at then is Truth?' A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you. How, then, you ask, different people think of different and contrary truths? Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another, and hence those who have made experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm. Everyone should, therefore, realize his limitations before he speaks of his inner voice. Therefore, we have the belief based upon experience, that those who would make individual search after truth as God, must go through several vows, as for instance, the vow of truth, the vow of brahmacharya (purity)—for you can not possibly divide your love for Truth and God with anything else—the vow of non-violence, of poverty and non-possession. Unless you impose on yourselves the five vows, may not embark on the experiment at all. There are several other conditions prescribed, but I must not take you through all of them. Suffice it to say that those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to bear the voice of conscience and it is because we have at the present moment everyone claiming the right of conscience without going through

any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All that I can in true humility present to you is that truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourselves to a zero. Further than this I cannot go along this fascinating path.

4.1.2 God as Truth and the Law :

He says, "I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts, in the sense that an earthly king and his law are different. Because God is an Idea, Law Himself. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law, He therefore, does not rule our actions and withdraw Himself. When we say He rules our actions, we are simply using human language and we try to limit Him. Otherwise, He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything. Therefore, I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that He rules our action. And I literally believe that not a blade of grass grows or moves without His will. The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck." Do you feel a sense of freedom in your communion with God?" I do. I do not feel cramped as I would on a boat full of passengers. Although I know that my freedom is less than that of a passenger, I appreciate that freedom as I have imbibed through and through the central teaching of the Gita that man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief."

Man was supposed to be the maker of his own destiny. It is partly true. He can make his destiny only in so far as he is allowed by the Great Power which overrides all our intentions, all our plans and carries out His Own plans. He called that Great Power not by the name of Allah, not by the name of Khuda or God but by the name of Truth. For me, Truth is God and

Truth overrides all our plans. The whole truth is only embodied within the heart of that Great Power- Truth. He was taught from my early days to regard Truth as unapproachable- something that you cannot reach. A great Englishman taught him to believe that God is unknowable. He is Knowable to the extent that our limited intellect allows.

4.1.3 The Character of Truth :

Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the coverings of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear.

Every expression of truth has in it the seeds of propagation, even as the sun cannot hide its light.

4.1.4 The Way of realizing Truth :

Life is a very complex thing, and truth and non-violence present problems, which often defy analysis and judgment. One discovers truth and the method of applying the only legitimate means of vindicating it, i.e. Satyagraha or soul-force, by patient endeavour and silent prayer.

He says, "I can only assure friends that I spare no pains to grope to my way to the right, and that humble but constant endeavour and silent prayer are always my two trusty companions along the weary but beautiful path that all seekers must tread. "

You cannot realize the wider consciousness, unless you subordinate completely reason and intellect, and the body, too .

It is unnecessary to believe in an extra mundane Power called God in order to sustain our faith in ahimsa. But God is not a Power residing in the clouds. God is an unseen Power residing within us and nearer to us than finger-nails to the flesh. There are many powers lying hidden within us and we find this Supreme Power if we make diligent search with the fixed

determination to find Him. One such way of ahimsa. It is so very necessary because God is in every one of us and, therefore, we have to identify ourselves with every human being without exception. This is called cohesion or attraction in scientific language. In the popular language it is called love. In the popular language it is called love. It binds us to one another and to God. Ahimsa and love are one and the same thing. I hope this is all clear to you.

4.1.5 Confession of Faith :

According to him he is a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good-wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed; but ever failing to reach the ideal which he knows to be true. It is a painful climb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure to him. Each step upward makes him feel stronger and fit for the next. He is impatient to realize the presence of his Maker, Who to me embodies Truth and in the early part of his career, he discovered that if he was to realize Truth, he must obey, even at the cost of his life, the law of Love.

4.1.6 Realization of God :

God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price; may He be so to every one of us. Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence.

But He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every the smallest act of His votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be, often are false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within. Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of

prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

4.1.7 Perfection Not Possible :

But it is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination. We cannot, through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body, see face to face Truth which is eternal. That is why in the last resort one must depend on faith.

No one can attain perfection while he is in the body for the simple reason that the ideal state is impossible so long as one has not completely overcome his ego, and ego cannot be wholly got rid of so long as one is tied down by the shackles of the flesh .

Man will ever remain imperfect, and it will always be his part to try to be perfect. So that perfection in love or non-possession will remain an unattainable ideal as long as we are alive but towards which we must ceaselessly strive .

4.1.8 Life and Death :

We are living in the midst of death. What is the value of 'working for our own schemes' when they might be reduced to naught in the twinkling of an eye, or when we may equally swiftly and unawares be taken away from them? But we may feel strong as a rock, if we could truthfully say 'we work for God and His schemes'. Then nothing perishes. All perishing is then only what seems. Death and destruction have them, but only then no reality about them. For death and destruction is then but a change .

4.1.9 The Desire for Moksha :

This led the interviewer on to a fundamental question. From a reading of Gandhiji's writings the friend had gathered that the root of all of Gandhiji's activities was the desire for moksha, emancipation. But why was not this aspect emphasized sufficiently? Gandhiji replied by taking recourse to a simile. He said the desire for moksha was indeed there, but it was not meant for anyone other than the individual himself. The world was interested in the fruits, not root. For the tree itself, however the chief concern should be not the fruit, but the root. It was in the depth of one's being that the individual had to concentrate. He had to nurse it with the water of his labour and suffering. The root was his chief concern.

4.1.10 Prayer :

"Prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore, prayer must be the very core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion."

When a man is down, he prays to God to lift him up. The appalling disaster in Quetta paralyses one. It hampers all attempt at reconstruction. The whole truth about the disaster will perhaps never be known. The dead cannot be recalled to life. Human effort must be there always. Those who are left behind must have help. Such reconstruction as is possible will no doubt be undertaken. All this and much more along the same line can never be a substitute for prayer. But why pray at all? Does He stand in need of prayer to enable Him to do His duty? No, God needs no reminder. He is within everyone. Nothing happens without His permission. Our prayer is a heart search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are

helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer,- without a definite recognition that the best human endeavour is of no effect if it has not God's blessing behind. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-Purification, to inward search. It asks those who appreciate the necessity of inward purification to join in the prayer that we may read the purpose of God in such visitations, that they may humble us and prepare us to face our Maker whenever the call comes, and that we may be.

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts.

4.1.11 God's Punishment :

Gandhiji admits that he does not believe in God. For God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His law carries with it, not its vindictive, but its purifying, compelling punishment.

4.1.12 Divine Aid :

God is the hardest taskmaster he has known on earth, and He tries us through and through. And when we find that our faith is falling or our body is failing, and we are sinking, He comes to our assistance somehow or other and proves to us that we must not lose our faith and that He is always at our beck and call, but on His terms, not on our terms.

4.1.13 The Gospel of Faith

"Faith is not a delicate flower, which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations. ... "

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

4.1.14 The Meaning Of God :

GOO MAY be called by any other name so long as it connotes the living Law of Life-in other words, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one.

God Himself is both the Law and the Law-giver. The question of anyone creating Him, therefore, does not arise, least of all by an insignificant creature such as man. Man can build a dam, but it is beyond him to make the wood. He can, however, picture God in his mind in many ways. But how can man who is unable to create even a river or wood create God? That God has created man is, therefore, the pure truth. The contrary is an illusion. However, anyone may, if he likes, say that God is neither the doer nor the cause. Either is predicable of him.

4.1.15 No Personal God :

he says, "I do not regard God as a person. Truth for me is God, and God's Law and God are not different things or facts, in the sense that an earthly king and his law are different. Because God is an Idea, Law Himself. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive God as breaking the Law. He, therefore, does not rule our actions and withdraw Himself. When we say He rules our actions, we are simply using human language and we try to

limit Him. Otherwise He and His Law abide everywhere and govern everything.

Therefore, I do not think that He answers in every detail every request of ours, but there is no doubt that He rules our action. ...The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck.

...Although I know that my freedom is less than that of a passenger, I appreciate that freedom, as I have imbibed through and through the central teaching of the Gita that man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief. "

Let this however be quite clear. The Almighty is not a person like us. He or It is the greatest living Force or Law in the world. Accordingly, He does not act by caprice, nor does that Law admit of any amendment or improvement. His will is fixed and changeless, everything else changes every second.

4.1.16 His Personality:

God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in His own image. Unfortunately for us, man has fashioned Him in his own. This arrogation has landed mankind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again, God lives, but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute.

Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exist 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. All the

dry ethics of the lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and ennoble us.

Conversely, God conceived without goodness is without life. We give Him life in our vain imagining.

4.1.17 Power of God :

Everything that has a beginning must end. The sun, the moon and the earth must all perish one day, even though it might be after an incalculable number of years. God alone is immortal, imperishable. How can anyone find words to describe Him?

God cannot be realized through the intellect. Intellect can lead one to a certain extent and no further. It is a matter of faith and experience derived from faith. One might rely on the experience of one's betters or else be satisfied with nothing less than personal experience. Full faith does not feel the want of experience.

God alone knows Absolute Truth. Therefore, I have often said, Truth is God. It follows that man, a finite being, cannot know Absolute Truth.

God is all-powerful. He can change the hearts of man and bring real peace among them.

Gandhiji's Rule :

According to him in the West, people talk of Christ, but it is really the Anti-Christ that rules their lives. Similarly, there are people who talk of Islam, but really follow the way of Satan. It is a deplorable state of affairs. ...If people follow the way of God, there will not be all this corruption and profiteering that we see in the world. The rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. Hunger, nakedness and death stare one in the face. These are not the marks of the Kingdom of God, but that of Satan, Ravana or Anti-Christ. We cannot expect to bring the reign of God on earth by merely

repeating His name with the lips. Our conduct must conform to His ways instead of Satan's. Only when God reigns in men's hearts will they be able to shed their anger.

All universal rules of conduct known as God's commandments are simple and easy to understand and carry out if the will is there. They only appear to be difficult because of the inertia, which governs mankind. Man is a progressive being. There is nothing at a standstill in nature. Only God is motionless for, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and yet is ever moving. We need not, however, worry ourselves over the attributes of God. We have to realize that we are ever progressing. Hence, I hold that if mankind is to live, it has to come growingly under the sway of truth and non-violence. It is in view of these two fundamental rules of conduct that I and you have to work and live. A mind not set on God is given to wandering and lacks the quality of a temple of worship.

4.1.18 God's Laws :

Human language can but imperfectly describe God's ways. He was sensible of the fact that they are indescribable and inscrutable. But if mortal man will dare to describe them, he has no better medium than his own inarticulate speech.

We do not know all the laws of God nor their working. Knowledge of the tallest scientist or the greatest spiritualist is like a particle of dust. If God is not a personal being for me like my earthly father, He is infinitely more. He rules me in the tiniest detail of my life. He believes literally that not a leaf moves but by His will. Every breath I take depends upon His sufferance.

He and His law are one. The Law is God. Anything attributed to Him is not a mere attribute. He is the attribute. He is Truth, Love, Law and a million other things that human ingenuity can name.

The laws of Nature are changeless, unchangeable, and there are no miracles in the sense of infringement or interruption of Nature's laws. But we, limited beings, fancy all kinds of things and impute our limitations to God. We may copy God, but not He us. We may not divide Time for Him. Time for Him is eternity. For us there is past, present and future. And what is human life of a hundred years but less than a mere speck in the eternity of Time?

4.1.19 God's Names :

God has a thousand names, or rather, He is Nameless. We may worship or pray to Him by whichever name that pleases us. Some call Him Rama, some Krishna, others call Him Rahim, and yet others call Him God. All worship the same spirit, but as all foods do not agree with all, all names do not appeal to all. Each chooses the name according to his associations, and He, being the In-Dweller, All-Powerful and Omniscient knows our innermost feelings and responds to us according to our deserts.

Worship or prayer, therefore, is not to be performed with the lips, but with the heart. And that is why it can be performed equally by the dumb and the stammered, by the ignorant and the stupid. And the prayers of those whose tongues are nectared but whose hearts are full of poison are never heard. He, therefore, who would pray to God, must cleanse his heart.

Rama was not only on the lips of Hanuman, He was enthroned in his heart. He gave Hanuman exhaustless strength. In His strength he lifted the mountain and crossed the ocean.

In his words, "I talk of God exactly as I believe Him to be... I believe God to be creative as well as non-creative. This too is the result of my acceptance of the doctrine of the manyness of reality. From the platform of the Jains I prove the non-creative aspect of God, and from that of Ramanuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact, we are all thinking of the Unthinkable, describing the Indescribable, seeking to know the unknown, and that why our speech falters, is inadequate and even often

contradictory. That is why the Vedas describe Brahman as 'not this', 'not this'."

In his opinion, Rama, Rahaman, Ahuramazda, God or Krishna are all attempts on the part of man to name that invisible force which is the greatest of all forces. It is inherent in man, imperfect though he is, ceaselessly to strive after perfection. In the attempt he falls into reverie. And, just as a child tries to stand, falls down again and again and ultimately learns how to walk, even so man, with all his intelligence, is a mere infant as compared to the infinite and ageless God. This may appear to be an exaggeration but is not. Man can only describe God in his own poor language.

4.2 Ramanama

Though his reason and heart long ago realized the highest attribute and name of God as Truth, he recognizes Truth by the name of Rama. In the darkest hour of my trial, that one name has saved him and is still saving him...he said. It may be the association of childhood, it may be the fascination that Tulsidas has wrought on him.....

He believes that his Lord Rama resided in the Ramji mandir which he often visits in his childhood. So he says, "He saved me from many fears and sins. It was no superstition for me. The custodian of the idol may have been a bad man. I know nothing against him. Misdeeds might have gone on in the temple. Again I know nothing of them. Therefore, they would not affect me. What was and is true of me is true of millions of Hindus".

4.2.1 One God :

he laughs within himself when someone objects that Rama or the chanting of Ramanama is for the Hindus only, how can Mussalmans therefore take part in it? Is there one God for the Mussalmans and another for the Hindus, Parsis or Christians? No, there is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us.

He says, "My Rama, the Rama of our prayers is not the historical Rama, the son Dasharatha, the King of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unhorn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship. His aid alone I see, and so should you. He belongs equally to all.

I, therefore, see no reason why a Mussalman or anybody should object to taking His name. But he is in no way bound to recognize God as Ramanama. He may utter to himself Allah or Khuda so as not to mar the harmony of the sound. To me...Rama, described as the Lord of Sita, son of Dasharatha, is the all-powerful essence whose name, inscribed in the heart, removes all suffering--mental, moral and physical. "

4.2.2 Curative Power :

An apt question is as to why a man who recites Ramanama regularly and leads a pure life should ever fall ill. Man is by nature imperfect. A thoughtful man strives after perfection, but never attains it. He stumbles on the way, however unwittingly. The whole of God's law is embodied in a pure life.

The first thing is to realize one's limitations. It should be obvious that, the moment one transgresses those limits, one falls ill. Thus a balanced diet eaten in accordance with needs gives one freedom from disease. How is one to know what is the proper diet for one? Many such enigmas can be imagined. The purport of it all is that everyone should be his own doctor

and find out his limitations. The man who does so will surely live up to
125. Ramanama cannot perform the miracle of restoring to you a lost limb. But it can perform the still greater miracle of helping you to enjoy an ineffable peace in spite of the loss while you live and roh death of its sting and the grave its victory at the journey's end. Since death must come soon or late to everyone, why should one worry over the time?

The practice of nature cure does not require high academic qualifications or much erudition. Simplicity is the essence of universality.

Nothing that is meant for the benefit of the millions requires much erudition. The latter can be acquired only by the few and, therefore, can benefit the rich only.

But India lives in her seven lakhs of villages-ohscure, tiny, out-of-the-way villages, where the population in some cases hardly exceeds a few hundred, very often not even a few score.

Purity of Thought :

It is conscious belief in God and a knowledge of His law that make perfect cure possible without any further aid. That law is that a perfect mind is responsible for perfect health of he hody. A perfect mind comes from a perfect heart, not the heart known hy a doctor's stethoscope but the heart which is the seat of God. It is claimed that realization of God in the heart makes it impossible for an impure or an idle thought to cross the mind. Disease is impossihle where there is purity of thought. Such a state may be difficult to attain. But the first step in the ascent to health is taken with its recognition. The next is taken when the corresponding attempt is made. This radical alteration in one's life is naturally accompanied by the observance of all other nature's laws hitherto discovered hy man. One cannot play with them and claim to have a pure heart.

It can be said with justice that possession of a pure heart should do equally well without Ramanama. Only, he knows no other way of attaining purity.

Spiritual force is like any other force at the service of man. Apart from the fact that it has been used for physical ailments for ages, with more or less success, it would be intrinsically wrong not to use it, if it can be successfully used for the cure of physical ailments. For, man is both matter and spirit, each acting on and affecting the other.

4.2.3 Prayer : The Food Of his Soul

"I CLAIM to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is."

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life, culminating in the defense of one's nation's liberty and honour. Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God.

He believes that food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to do without food for a number of days--as Mac Swiney did for over 70 days--but, believing in God, man cannot, should not live a moment without prayer.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit, believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why, then, is it necessary to recite His name? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences?

4.2.4 Character of Prayer :

Supplication, worship, prayer are no superstition; they are acts more real than the acts of eating, drinking, sitting or walking. It is no exaggeration to say that they alone are real, all else is unreal.

Such worship or prayer is no flight of eloquence; it is no lip-homage. It springs from the heart. If, therefore, we achieve that purity of the heart when it is 'emptied of all but love', if we keep all the chords in proper tune, they 'trembling pass in music out of sight'. Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort.

He says , "Prayer has been the saving of my life. Without it I would have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you that I have had my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer.

Now I may tell you that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And the more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it."

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, he had never lost his peace. In fact, he had found people who envy his peace. That peace, he tell you, comes from prayer; he was not a man of learning, but he was a man of prayer. He was indifferent as to the form. Every one is a law into himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trod by the ancient teachers.

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him, but also from the hearts of others.

In the first shloka of Ishopanishad that is repeated everyday at the beginning of the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The principle condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion.

4.2.5 Essence of Prayer :

But God does not come down in person to relieve suffering. He works through human agency. Therefore, prayer to God to enable one to relieve the suffering of others must mean a longing and a readiness on one's part to labour for it.

The prayer... is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own caste or community. It is all inclusive. It comprehends the whole of humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

4.2.6 Efficacy of Silence :

It has often occurred to me that a seeker after truth has to be silent. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man, and silence is necessary in order to surmount it.

A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech; he will measure every word. Silence of the sewn-up lips is no silence. One may achieve the same result by chopping off one's tongue, but that too would not be silence. He is silent who, having the capacity to speak, utters no idle word.

4.2.7 Power of Prayer :

Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts....Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of a square, and the other angles will be automatically right. Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

One with a wicked heart can never be conscious of the all-purifying presence of God. God answers prayer in His own way, not ours. His ways are different from the ways of mortals. Hence they are inscrutable. Prayer presupposes faith. No prayer goes in vain. Prayer is like any other action. It bears fruit whether we see it or not, and the fruit of heart prayer is far more potent than action so-called.

4.3 Gandhiji's Views On Truth

4.3.1 Truth (Meaning of Truth):

Deal with truth first of all, as the Satyagraha Asram owes its very existence to the pursuit and the attempted practice of truth.

The word satya (Truth) is derived from Sat which means 'being'. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God, In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say God is truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or a general, such names of God as 'King' or 'Kings' or 'The Almighty' are and will remain generally current. On deeper thinking, however it will be realized that Sat or Satya is the only correct and fully sign. fact name for God.

And where there is Truth, there is also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word Chit or knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss. (Ananda). There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as Sat-Chit-ananda, one who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life.

When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be

instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the Truth. But we in the Ashram should understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be truth in thought, truth in speech, and truth in action. To the man who has realized this truth in its fullness, nothing else remains to be known, because all knowledge is necessarily included in it. What is not included in it is not truth, and so not true knowledge; and there can be no inward peace without true knowledge. If we once learn how to apply this never failing test of Truth, we will at once be able to find out what is worth doing, what is worth seeing, what is worth reading.

But how is one to realize this Truth, which may be likened to the philosopher's stone or the cow of plenty? By single minded devotion (abhyasa) and indifference to all other interests in life (vairagya) replies the Bhagavadgita. In spite, however of such devotion, what may appear as Truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree. Does not God himself appear to different individuals in different aspects? Yet we know that He is one. But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of any one so following Truth it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves tapas self suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it even a trace of self interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it

for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to life eternal. In this connection it will be well to ponder over the lives and examples of Harishchandra, Prahlad, Ramchandra, Imam Hussain, the Christians saints, etc. How beautiful it would be if all of us, young and old, men and women devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking, or playing till dissolution of the body makes us one with Truth? God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price; may He be so to every one of us.

4.3.2 Truth & Beauty :

Inwardness of Art :

There are two aspects of things—the outward and the inward.... The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus an expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.

Truth First :

Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Muhammad, the Koran being, the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature—at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth that the grace of expression naturally came in and yet neither Jesus nor Muhammad wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for.

Inner Purity :

True art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life... True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment and purity of its authors. True beauty after all consists in purity of heart.

Beauty in Truth :

To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the Truth within the soul. There is... no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms, which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time, and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also.

Truth and Untruth often co-exist; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom the right perception of things and the wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these monuments are rare in life, they are also rare in Art.

These beauties are sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the center of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances if they did not help me to think of the soul is a delusion and a snare; even like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.

4.3.3 Truth Is God :

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. He can feel it, though he do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that be perceive through his senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.

His Faith :

"I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of God is unthinkable."

"I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. "

4.3.4 Nature of God :

According to him God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word, for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly.

He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us...

He cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman

crutalities are committed in His name. He is long-suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbors—men and brutes.

With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is ever forgiving, for He always gives us the chance to repent.

He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense.

Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport-lila, or calls it all an illusion-maya. We are not, He alone is. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His bansi-lute, and all would be well.

He says, "In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe—and I think it is the truth—that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and, since God has many forms, we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us through many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam, I found that Islam too had many names for God."

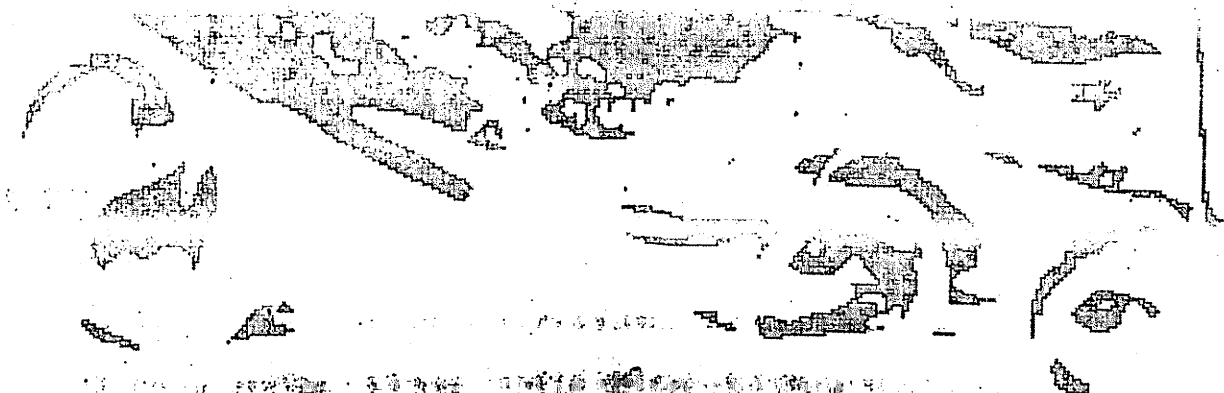
"I would say with those who say God is Love, God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be Love, God is Truth, above all. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, I have come to the conclusion that, for myself, God is Truth.

But two years ago I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz., that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth, which began nearly fifty years ago."

"I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was through love. But I also found that love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of ahimsa had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with truth and not even an atheist had demurred to the necessity or power of truth.

But, in their passion for discovering truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God--from their own point of view, rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that, rather than say that God is Truth, I should say that Truth is God." God is Truth, but God is many other things also. That is why I say Truth is God.... Only remember that Truth is not one of the many qualities that we name. It is the living embodiment of God, it is the only Life, and I identify Truth with the fullest life, and that is how it becomes a concrete thing, for God is His whole creation, the whole Existence, and service of all that exists-Truth-is service of God."

Perfection is the attribute of the Almighty, and yet what a great democrat He is! What an amount of wrong and humbug He suffers on our part! He even suffers us insignificant creatures of His to question His very existence, though He is in every atom about us, around us and within us. But He has reserved to Himself the right of becoming manifest to whomsoever He chooses. He is a Being without hands and feet and other organs, yet he can see Him to whom He chooses to reveal Himself. He was endeavoring to see God through service of humanity, for this he knew that God is neither in heaven, nor in down below, but in every one. He is the ALMIGHTY ,Guider and Protector.



"Gandhi had demonstrated that a powerful human following can be assembled... through the cogent example of a morally superior conduct of life."

..... Albert Einstein.

Conclusion

Role and contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the freedom movement of India is noteworthy, extraordinary and exemplary. And those who are familiar with the whole series of events of the national liberation movement of the country know how he awakened the masses on the strength of Ahimsa-the non-violence; made them realize the value of independence and accorded Satyagraha-the best and infallible weapon and called them cut down their centuries old chains of slavery. People of India, crores in number, came to the forefront and ultimately in the year 1947 India became free from the political rule of the English.

Besides Shakyamuni Gautama, it was Mahatma Gandhi who for the first time in the entire human history through his mass actions on the basis of Ahimsa-the non-violence showed such a unique way to humanity which apart from being welfareistic, exemplary and the best, became the source of inspiration for many in the world, as said already, and if it is applied today anywhere or any time to come, according to prevailing conditions of time and space, it is capable to bring beautiful results. For this reason Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi raised to the position of a Mahatma; people around the world respect him .

Gandhian philosophy is not only simultaneously political, moral and religious, it is also traditional and modern, simple and complex. It embodies numerous Western influences to which Gandhi was exposed, but being rooted in ancient Indian culture and harnessing eternal and universal moral and religious principles, there is much in it that is not at all new. This is why Gandhi could say: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills."

Art and artistic creation have always given a reflection of the social, economic and intellectual environment of a society. The period of the Indian freedom struggle was full of patriotism when everybody worked together under the leadership of great men, MAHATMA GANDHI.

Today, we are passing through a crisis – a crisis of identification of values. The world is entrapped in gross materialism. Man has become so selfish as to have utter disregard for others whether an individual or a society or a nation. Scientists are vying with each other to play the role of the Creator. It is high time to create a balance between materialism and spiritualism. In the chaotic circumstances prevailing all over the world today, we are looking for peace as elusive as the mirage in a desert. For this, Mahatma Gandhi's life and his teachings can serve as beacon-lights to guide us and lead us to steady peace.

To change the minds of the younger generations and the attitude of the people towards man and society in the new millennium and the centuries GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY is one of the main spinning wheel to create a balance between materialism and spiritualism.

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