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● *We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance received from the Indian Council of Social Science Research for the production of this journal*

Information for Authors

Gandhi Marg is the premier quarterly journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation having a standing of more than half a century published from New Delhi in the months of March, June, September and December every year. Original contributions on themes of national and international importance falling under the broad area of Gandhian Studies are invited from scholars and practitioners. Articles submitted to Gandhi Marg are refereed. It is presumed that an article submitted to Gandhi Marg is original, and has not been under the consideration of any other journal. In general, the articles should not exceed 8000 words including notes and references. Periodically, we also bring out special issues on selected themes.

We also invite provocative shorter essays (1500-2500 words) for inclusion in the notes and comments section. Review articles assessing a number of recent books on a particular subject and book reviews are also solicited.

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Examples

Books: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.23.

Articles: Ramashray Roy, "Parameters of Participation", *Gandhi Marg*, 12, 3(October-December 1990), p.276.

Chapters within Books: Pearl S. Buck, "A Way of Living", in S. Radhakrishnan, ed., *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays* and Reflections (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1956), p.51.

Internet Citations: Apart from name of author and article, include also the URL and date of download. For example: www.un.org accessed on 10 May 2006.

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Editorial

FOR THE LAST eleven years, I have been editing *Gandhi Marg* in an honorary capacity against heavy odds, sparing time from my otherwise busy academic and administrative schedule. I took over as editor following the death of Professor Mahendra Kumar in early 2006. Many thought that the epitaph of *Gandhi Marg* (English) was about to be written with at least three issues left to be published then. The journal did survive this far. A few changes have been introduced and a number of special issues were brought out. The subscription also improved, though far below the journal's potential. *Gandhi Marg* has maintained its position as the topmost journal in the field of Gandhian Studies globally. I have endeavoured to transform the journal into a more broad-based one with a normative social science orientation. As editor, I was often at my wits end, navigating among the articles written with referencing styles that suited the author. References were often incomplete, forcing me to fill the gaps, which involved considerable patience and drain on my time with attendant implications for my own research. Roughly 40 percent of the articles that we received could not be published due to a variety of reasons.

We, at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, were all saddened by the demise of Anupam Mishra, the editor of the independent Hindi version of *Gandhi Marg*. The void that he has created is a deep one and is indeed difficult to fill. This issue will carry a special section in his memory. We also lost Antony Copley of Kent University, who was a well-wisher and regular contributor to the Journal.

This issue is a combined issue carrying seven articles, two short articles in the Notes and Comments section and a book review. The first article by A Pushparajan explores how the differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar highlighted by some ignore the efforts they made to befriend each other respectfully and how this dimension can inform contemporary dalit discourse. The second article by Saral Jhingran identifies the biggest source of violence as man's ego, 'the

sense of selfhood pitted against all other selves'. The following article by K Michael George examines the distortions embedded in neo-liberal GDP growth cartographies that disguise social injustices meted out to the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Uganda in particular. Karunakar Patra attempts to put forward an alternative version of political theory rooted in Indian tradition that Gandhi had assimilated. Vibin Padayadan examines the context for the evolution of environmental ethics and the need to factor it in education programmes. George Paxton analyses the usefulness of nonviolent resistance by taking up the Nazi case. The final article by Persis Latika Dass examines the possibility of moral education that can lead to the development of a national character drawing on Gandhian Ashram observances.

I hope this combined issue will provide the readers with a good range of articles worthy of serious reflection.

John S Moolakkattu
Editor

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Gandhi and Ambedkar: Befriending the Order Respectfully[1]

A. Pushparajan

ABSTRACT

As against the emerging trend among the Ambedkarites to project Gandhi as hostile to the Dalit cause merely on the ground of his confrontation with Ambedkar on the issue of the Communal Award, this paper sets the said confrontation against their efforts to befriend each other respectfully. Further, the paper gives an account of the enormous contributions Gandhi made for the eradication of untouchability. Finally, an attempt is made to give certain indications to understand the differences of outlook and approach between the two leaders so that their followers may befriend each other respectfully and collaborate with one another and realize their common cause of Dalit betterment.

Key words: Gandhi, Ambedkar, Befriending, Dalits, Communal Award

Introduction

UNDOUBTEDLY, MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI (1869 -1948 and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) are key national leaders with a vision for the emancipation of the oppressed. One is rightly called the 'Father of the Nation' and the other, 'Father of the Constitution.' However, it is true that they both got into conflict with each other on the occasion of the Communal Award during the colonial era.

It is also a fact of history that they proved themselves illustrious exemplars of befriending each other, despite their differences in their perspective, approach and ideology. It is unfortunate that people have not taken note of this aspect of their encounter. Particularly the Dalits, in their eagerness to make Ambedkar into a pan-Indian Dalit

icon, seem to project Gandhi as an archenemy of Ambedkar. In the process the real enemy of Dalits' liberation, the Brahminical hegemony, escapes unnoticed and unchallenged.

If one, without sitting in judgement on either of them, makes sense of the diversity of ideas, approaches and standpoints, and learn to go beyond the temporal particularities of their controversies to comprehend the universal elements in their genuine concerns, ideas and approaches,[2] then one is sure to find a lot of room for both the Gandhiites and Ambedkarites to befriend each other respectfully. This would not only enhance the scope of their collaboration in promoting Dalits'cause but also will heighten their challenge to the common enemy. Hence, this paper first attempts to set the issue of the confrontation of the two great leaders of modern India against the background of their efforts to befriend each other respectfully.

My further assumption is that the Ambedkarities, in their enthusiasm to praise the greatness of Ambedkar, fail to esteem Gandhi's understanding of Dalit sense of hurt and pain and the enormous contribution he made towards eradication of untouchability. They seem to even poison the minds of young generation with false information about Gandhi. Hence, the second part of the paper proceeds to simply enumerate Gandhi's endeavours to remove the sting of untouchability in the Indian society.

Of course, there is the need to tackle squarely the wider issue of the caste question about which the two leaders had contrary views and approaches. Though the scope of this paper does not allow an elaborate treatment of that issue, yet an attempt is made in the third and final part of this paper to highlight some indications to understand the differences, with the hope that it will pave the way to mutual befriending by the Ambedkarites and Gandhiites for common action against the common enemy.

PART 1 : CONFRONTATION AND YET BEFRIENDING

People seem to focus mainly on the actual confrontation that took place between Gandhi and Ambedkar on the occasion of the Communal Award, granted by the colonialist regime. But it is also a fact that that there were many efforts on their part to befriend each other. It is harmful simply to focus only on their confrontation without situating it in the proper context in which it took place. Hence, in this part an attempt is made to explain the context in which the confrontation took place between the two leaders and expound their subsequent efforts to befriend each other.

1.1. The Context of Confrontation

First of all, it must be borne in mind that the very ground of confrontation of Gandhi and Ambedkar was carved by the colonialists at the crucial moment of mobilization of the whole nation into freedom struggle. Moreover, the question of caste consciousness was itself the "result of the historical relationship between India and the British colonial rule." Dr. Nicholas B. Dirks of Columbia University in his latest book[3] argues out powerfully that the British really engaged in manipulation of the caste system for their colonial control of India for 200 years. They did not invent caste, true. The so-called 'castes' were all merely diverse forms of social identity and organization of the Indian society. Caste was neither an unchanged survival of ancient India nor a basic expression of Indian tradition. But it was the British who subsumed them all into a single term caste. And they did it for the benefit of colonialist control. This is the finding of Dr. Dirks, based on substantial evidence he has collected.

Contrastingly, the very same point was perceived by Gandhi already a century ago. "It was a decisive symptom, and with the unerring eye of the physician that I claim to be in such matters, I detected the symptom," said Gandhi.[4] He also claimed that untouchability is our problem which we will solve on our own. They need not settle it for us. To put it in his own words:

> The Cabinet composed of foreigners, knowing nothing first-hand of the Indian conditions or what untouchability could mean, were labouring under a heavy handicap, and even though some Indians had referred this matter to them, they should have declined the responsibility to which they were wholly unequal.[5]

The colonialist British were using the divide and rule policy for upkeeping their political supremacy in India, specially trying to dislodge Gandhi from his leadership of the national movement. But Gandhi's objection was based completely on the unity of India. Ambedkar, quite anxious to get a possible institutional mechanism to solve the Dalit problem thought it strategically useful to ask for separate electorate in the Second Round Table Conference. By the way, it should be noted that the purpose of the Round Table Conference itself was to discuss constitutional reforms in India, as per the recommendation by Simon Commission report. It was in that context that Ambedkar was insisting on separate electorate to be included in the would-be-Constitution of India. It was seconded by many of the delegates too. But it must be remembered that they were all nominated by the colonialist Raj. If at all good intention prevailed in them, the

separate electorates as well as reservations of constituencies would only be political safeguards. They would not solve the moral problem. It was in this context that Gandhi challenged them thus: "Those who speak of the political rights of 'untouchables' do not know India, and do not know how Indian society is today constructed."[6] He even went to the extent of saying: "if I was the only person to resist the thing, I will resist it with my life." Gandhi was never against the representation of the Dalits in the legislature. On the contrary, he was anxious to secure adequate representation for them. He even expressed his readiness under certain conditions to guarantee by statute a specified number of seats to be filled by them. He discussed several alternative proposals instead of separate electorates.

1.2. The Actual Confrontation

Ambedkar's viewpoint was that the untouchables were a separate community different from Hindus, and they should be named as non-caste Hindus, protestant Hindus or non-conformist Hindus. So he put forward this question: "If Raj could provide separate electorates for Sikhs, Muslims and India's Europeans, why not a separate Dalit electorate?" But Gandhi insisted that the untouchables were not a separate community but an integral part of the Hindu society, though a suppressed lot. They are not like the Muslims or Sikhs or the Anglo-Indians. Gandhi's counter question was, "Sikhs may remain in perpetuity, so may Mohamedans, so may Europeans (Anglo-Indians). Will untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity?"[7] In other words, religion formed an essential aspect of one's identity and people take pride in identifying themselves by their religious identity. Accordingly, even a political representation on the basis of the religious identity of the group is quite understandable. On the contrary, caste-oppression is really a moral degeneration within Hinduism. Can anyone be identified by a mark of degradation? Even if a customary practice is there, will it be morally proper to make a degraded practice the hallmark of a group's identity? So Gandhi argued that while the religious groups may be recognised by separate electorate, the so-called untouchables cannot be given legal sanction and a statutory recognition by separate electorate independently.

It was only in 1931 that a face to face meeting of Gandhi with Ambedkar took place in Mumbai. Then it continued in verbal encounters in Round Table Conference in London in 1931, and sustained in 1932 in Yervada Jail in Pune. Afterwards, many exchanges were resumed through the press in the mid-1930s, though the Ambedkar – Gandhi debate was interrupted by Gandhi's frequent imprisonments from 1930-34 and again 1940-44, while Ambedkar was

not only never imprisoned by the British but was even included in the Viceroys executive council during 1940-45. This would prove that the British were clearly using Ambedkar's grievance for their divide and rule policy.

The separate electorate was at best certain political safeguards. Gandhi said. 'What I want is eradication of untouchability, root and branch.' It is the caste Hindus who were responsible for the condition of the Dalits. It is precisely they who have to do social justice to Dalits by fully integrating the latter within their fold. This they can do only if the Dalits are elected through a joint electorate. The political participation of the Dalits through separate electorate will help only the top ten divisions among them but it would not help the last of the least. "How can I go out of an express train and jump into an aeroplane? I shall only be falling into my destruction,"[8] he exclaimed. Granting separate electorates to Dalits "is equal to killing them." He pointed to the actual Dalits' existence in villages and argued thus: 'They are in the hands of superior classes. They can suppress them completely and wreck vengeance upon the untouchables who are at their mercy. Can every village be divided permanently and be involved in a warlike situation?'

It was foreseeing such circumstances that Gandhi warned the British Government not to take such steps as those that Ambedkar sought. If taken, he said: "If I were the only person to resist the thing I will resist it with my life."[9] But the British Government did not pay any heed to Gandhi's warning. It announced the Communal Award on August 17, 1932. Accordingly, separate electorates were retained for the minority communities like the Muslims and Sikhs. So also, untouchables would be treated as a minority community and so given separate electorate for the 78 seats reserved for the Daits. This was indeed what Ambedkar wanted. Hence it was a victory for him.

However, in the eyes of Gandhi, "separate electorates and separate reservations were not the ways to remove the bar sinister."[10] This would only create a division of Hinduism as well as division among the villages. Separate electorates will only ensure that the untouchables are kept in bondage perpetually. So, Gandhi had to declare 'fast unto death,' according to his inner convictions, even though he was in the prison at Yervada. On 20th September 1932, the day he commenced the fast, in an interview with the Press representatives, Gandhi expressed the rationale of his fast, thus:

> In attacking untouchability I have gone to the very root of the matter, and therefore, it is an issue of transcendental value, far surpassing *Swaraj* in terms of political constitutions, and I would say that such a constitution

> would be a dead weight if it was not backed by a moral basis…It is only because the English officials cannot possibly see this living side of the picture that in their ignorance and self-satisfaction they dare to sit as judges upon questions that affect the fundamental being of millions of people, and here I mean both caste Hindus and 'untouchables,' that is suppressor and suppressed; and it was in order to wake up even officialdom from its gross ignorance, if I may make use of such an expression without being guilty of offence that I felt impelled by a voice from within to offer resistance with the whole of being.[11]

One may think that it was a 'political stunt' as Ambedkar himself described it. But if one considers the precarious conditions in which Gandhi was in at a time when the very worst was about to happen, and still he was ready to face it dauntlessly, one will see his sincerity of purpose. On the same day in a letter to a friend Gandhi wrote: "What I am aiming at is a heart understanding between the two, the greatest opportunity of repentance and reparation on the part of the suppressors. I am certain that the moment is ripe for the change of heart among them."[12] In another letter Gandhi penned this: "However the aim of my fast is not merely to get the decision changed but to bring about the awakening and self-purification which are bound to result from the effort to get the decision changed. In other words this was an opportunity to strike at the very root of untouchability."[13]

The religious significance of his fast may be clearly seen from the following words Gandhi uttered in the Press interview:

> My fight against untouchability is a fight against the impure in humanity…with a heart – so far as it is possible for a human being to achieve – free of impurity, free of all malice and all anger. You will, therefore, see that my fast is based first of all on faith in my cause, faith in the Hindu community, faith in human nature itself and faith even in the official world. My cry will rise to the throne of the Almighty God."[14]

Already when Gandhi had announced his decision to go for a fast, the Hindu leaders such as the Congress President C. Rajagopalachari, and many others[15] had met in Bombay, making negotiations with Dr. Ambedkar and his colleagues like Dr. Solanki. Gandhi was quite concerned about the outcome of such a meeting. Out of affection for him, they should not arrive at a rough and ready agreement. Expressing this concern he said:

> What I want, what I am living for, and what I should delight in dying for, is the eradication of untouchability root and branch. ... My life I count of no consequence. One hundred lives given for this noble cause would, in my opinion, be poor penance done by Hindus for the atrocious wrongs

> they have heaped upon helpless men and women of their own faith….I, therefore, would urge them not to swerve an inch from the path of strictest justice.[16]
>
> My fast I want to throw in the scales of justice, and if it wakes up Caste Hindu from their slumber, and if they are roused to a sense of their duty, it will have served its purpose…. My fight against untouchability is a fight against the impure in humanity….You will, therefore, see that my fast is based first of all in the cause of faith in the Hindu community, faith in human nature itself and faith even in the official world.[17]

On the second day of the fast, Gandhi made it clear about his readiness to accept reservation of seats provided that it was under joint electorate:

> My own opinion is quite clear. I would accept any pact that has not a tinge of separate electorate about it. I would with utmost reluctance tolerate reservation of seats under a joint electorate scheme. But I should insist upon what is to me the vital part of the pact, the social and religious reform. And, therefore, whilst if a settlement is arrived at on the joint electorate scheme and separate electorate is withdrawn by the British Government, I will break my fast. I will immediately give notice to millions of Hindus who have flocked around me at the innumerable meetings from one end of India to the other, that if within, say, six months the social reform is not demonstrably achieved, the fast will be taken up again. For if I do not do so I would be guilty of betraying God in whose name I have taken this great fast and the interest of untouchables for whose sake it has been taken.[18]

1.3. Their Attempts at Befriending Each Other

On the fourth day of the fast, when Ambedkar met Gandhi, on 23rd September 1932, he expressed his grief openly: "You have been very unfair to us." Gandhi replied to him: "It is always my lot to appear to be unfair. I cannot help it." The conversation was protracted. Gandhi lay weak and still in his bed and Ambedkar did most of the talking. The one sentence which everyone overheard more easily than any other was "I want compensation." After a sympathetic listening to Ambedkar, Gandhi not only agreed that Dalits should have seats in proportion to their population. That Gandhi respected Ambedkar's view will be clear if one is aware of Gandhi's earlier position. In a letter he had written on the day of commencement of his fasting, he said:

> If you will not resent my saying it, I would like to say that as I am "touchable" by birth, I am an "untouchable" by choice. …It is that dual

> capacity that has compelled the fast. Looking at the matter in this light I must say that I am not in love with the idea of statutory reservation. Whilst it is not open to the same objection that separate electorate is, I have not a shadow of a doubt that it will prevent the natural growth of the supressed classes and will remove the incentive to honourable amends from the suppressors."[19]

However, after listening to the pleas of Ambedkar, he not only agreed to the reservation of seats, but even agreed to increase the number of parliamentary seats to148 under the joint electorate, while the Communal Award had prescribed only 71 seats through separate electorates. Accordingly, therefore, in all these Dalit electorates, they will exercise their voting power in two phases. In each of the Dalit constituencies they would elect four candidates separately and constitute a panel. Subsequently, the general electorate would choose one of the four so elected earlier. This agreement was named as the Poona Pact, ratified on 25th September 1932. And it was accepted by the Government, thereby nullifying the Communal Award.

This was certainly a positive step on the part of Gandhi towards befriending Ambedkar. The man who had objected to separate electorates and statutory reservations came down to accept the idea of statutory reservation of seats for Dalits, after listening to Ambedkar.

On his side, Ambedkar agreed to give up what he had gained from the Communal Award, where only Dalits would have voted for Dalit candidates, to save Gandhi's life. The government accepted the joint proposal, and Gandhi broke his fast. The essence of this pact was subsequently enshrined in free India's Constitution.[20] Though it could be argued that Ambedkar agreed to this pact under duress, yet his acceptance of the reserved constituencies in the Constitution cannot be construed as an outcome of a conspiracy of Congress or a surrender by Ambedkar.

In fact, Ambedkar, after conversing with Gandhi in the jail, had expressed great appreciation for his sympathetic understanding of the Dalit issue and also on his readiness to compromise on his stand. Though Ambedkar had to lose the immediate political gain he had achieved from the communal award, he manifested great humanity and readiness to befriend the other [21] as it is evident from the following words of his:

> No man was placed in a greater and graver dilemma than I was then. It was a baffling situation. I had to make a choice between two different alternatives. There was before me the duty, *which I owed as a part of common humanity*, to save Gandhi from sure death. There was before me the problem of saving for the untouchables the political rights which the

> Prime Minister had given them. I responded to the call of humanity and saved the life of Mr. Gandhi by agreeing to alter the Communal Award in a manner satisfactory to Mr. Gandhi.[22]

When the settlement was arrived at, Gandhi also acknowledged that it was a "generous gesture on all sides." He accredited that "it is a meeting of hearts."[23] Referring to Dr. Ambedkar, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan and their party on the one hand, and Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah on the other, he gratefully wrote these words:

> They could have taken up an uncompromising and defiant attitude by way of punishment to the so-called caste Hindus for the sins of generations. If they had done so, I at least could not have resented their attitude and my death would have been but a trifling price exacted for the tortures that the outcastes of Hinduism have been going through for unknown generations. But they chose a nobler path and have thus shown that they have followed the precept of forgiveness enjoined by all religions.[24]

It was not merely a politeness that impelled Gandhi to utter the words mentioned above. He brought out the implications by reminding the caste Hindus of their immediate duty: "Let me hope that the caste Hindus will prove themselves worthy of this forgiveness and carry out to the letter and spirit every clause of the settlement with all its implications". Gandhi even gave evidence to show that he esteemed the Pact as well as the friendship of Ambedkar.

> The settlement is but the beginning of the end. The political part of it, very important though, it no doubt is, occupies but a small space in the vast field of reform that has to be tackled by caste Hindus during the coming days…I should be guilty of a breach of trust if I did not warn fellow reformers and caste Hindus in general that the breaking of the fast carried with it a sure promise of a resumption of it, if this reform is not relentlessly pursued and achieved within a measurable period.[25]

The confrontation between the two leaders was purely based upon the differences in the way they perceived the problems, the type of solution they offered, and the methods they adopted in rooting out the evil of untouchability. The differences did not mean that they were enemies to each other, as it is made out by the supporters of Ambedkar. There is sufficient evidence to show that they respected each other.

Gandhi is known to have had deep affection for Ambedkar which was also reciprocated by Ambedkar. Even while ruthlessly attacking Gandhi on his viewpoints, Ambedkar never denied Gandhi the credit

he deserved. Shortly after signing the pact, Ambedkar said he was "surprised, immensely surprised" to find "so much in common" between Gandhi and himself. He frankly told Gandhi: "If you devoted yourself entirely to the welfare of the Depressed Classes you would become our hero."[26]

The great respect Gandhi developed for Ambedkar was also clear from the recognition he expressed on the occasion of 'ill-treatment' of Ambedkar meted out by a Lahore-based Brahmin Society. The organizing committee of the *Jat-Pat Todak Mandal* (Society for the Abolition of Caste system) had extended an invitation to Ambedkar to deliver a speech at their annual conference in 1936. Ambedkar also readily consented to it and prepared the text of his speech well in advance, and sent it under the title "Annihilation of Caste." But they found objections to those portions that dealt with his intellectual assault on the *Vedas* and *Shastras*, and asked Ambedkar to delete them. But Ambedkar declared that he "would not change a comma." This resulted in their withdrawal of the invitation. Thus, Ambedkar was denied the opportunity of delivering his speech in that conference. When Gandhi came to know about it, he published his comments in his weekly *Harijan,* thus:

> The committee appears to have deprived the public of an opportunity of listening to the original views of a man, who has carved out for himself a unique position in society. Whatever label he wears in future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten…No reformer can ignore the address. The orthodox will gain by reading it.[27]

It is indeed remarkable that the Communal Award confrontation resulted in Gandhi's partnership with Ambedkar in the final phase of his life. Gandhi's attitude of befriending Ambedkar was definitely a factor that gave him an entry into the Constituent Assembly, although Ambedkar was defeated in the elections to the ConstituentAssembly. It was thanks to Gandhi's befriending attitude towards Ambedkar that Nehru was prompted to invite Ambedkar to be the Minister of Law in his cabinet. Again, it was Gandhi who made Congress people recognise the worth of Ambedkar, so as to make him the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution. Everyone knows of the amazing results that followed Ambedkar's induction into the Constitution-making exercise. A brilliant and passionate human being as he was able to draft a Constitution that ensured equal rights to all in a society that had treated the depressed castes as inferior and untouchable for centuries. Further, if an elected Constituent Assembly in which a large majority were caste Hindus, were able to welcome

and adopt such a Constitution, it was mainly because Gandhi had prepared their conscience to accept the attitude of befriending Ambedkar respectfully.

On the part of Ambedkar also it was his befriending attitude that compelled him to accept the opportunities provided to him, because he thought it would give him the scope for serving the Dalits, the goal for which he had been living all through his political career. He also recognized that he got that opportunity mainly because of Gandhi. This is clear from the glorious tribute Ambedkar paid while addressing the Rajya Sabha in 1954, in the fag end of his political career, that 'he knew of no other person who had done so much for the untouchable.'[28]

In sum, therefore, it is in respect of this quality of befriending each other that Gandhi and Ambedkar proved to be great leaders of humanity. Although they were quite contrary to each other in their personality traits, perspectives on the problem of the untouchables and approach towards its solution, yet they could go beyond these contingent aspects and befriend each other for the sake of the interest of the nation and the cause of humanity.

PART 2 : GANDHI'S FIGHT AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY

From the foregoing it is clear that Gandhi and Ambedkar, despite their confrontation on the concrete instance of Communal Award, were able to befriend each other because of the common cause of the nation in particular and of humanity in general. More than that, if only people knew the enormous contributions Gandhi made to the removal of the sting of untouchability in Indian society, they will not indulge in mudslinging at Gandhi. Hence, this part of the paper is devoted to giving an account of Gandhi's efforts for Dalit liberation.

1. Even as a boy, Gandhi felt an instinctive revulsion at the practice of untouchability that was common in those days. A scavenger named Uka used to attend to the cleaning of latrines in his house. If Mohan had accidently touched Uka, he was asked to perform a ritual ablution by his mother. As a very dutiful and obedient child, he obeyed her in so far as it was consistent with respect for parents. But it was "not without smilingly protesting that untouchability was not sanctioned by religion and that it was impossible for it to be so."[29] He had even tussles with his mother on this point. He would tell her that 'she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka was sinful.'[30]

2. As a young man Gandhi thought of the sin of untouchability as satanic. A Brahman by named Ladha Maharaj was stricken with leprosy. However, he was confident of getting cured by regularly reading

Ramayana. Later, he was actually cured of the disease. At this instance, the young Gandhi told himself 'how can the Ramayana countenance the idea of any human beings being untouchable on the ground that they were polluted souls?' because he knew that the same Ramayana reports that Rama carried across the Ganga in a boat an untouchable. Later he emphatically told the orthodox Hindus that it would be a sin for them to regard anyone born in Hinduism as polluted or untouchable especially as they address Rama as "the Purifier of the Polluted."[31]

3. When Gandhi came to know of the Mahabharata story of Krishna honouring Sudama in his rags. To those who thought untouchability was sanctioned in the Shastras, Gandhi's retort was that if they accepted *Gita's* teachings of equality of all human beings, they could not claim that the Smritis sanction untouchability.

4. Later, Gandhi became convinced that the members of all the four varnas should be treated on an equal basis. True, he said, it does not prescribe the same dharma for the Brahmana as for the Bhangi, but it insists that Bhangi will be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the Brahmin with all the superior learning.

5. Gandhi gratefully acknowledged that Ramba, an old servant of the family, belonging to the Dalit community was his spiritual guru. When he was young he was tormented with fear of ghosts and spirits. It was she who taught him the value of *namajapa,* (repetition of Rama-nama) as a remedy for it. The good seed that was sown by this good woman, Ramba proved "an infallible remedy" for Gandhi.[32]Another occasion when he gratefully remembered her was when he was in London. When a friend was arguing with him relentlessly against vegetarianism, Gandhi became uncompromising and would pray for God's protection daily. "That faith was sown by the good nurse Ramba," said Gandhi.[33]

6. The prolonged liberation struggle that Gandhi had to lead in South Africa was meant to secure justice for the indentured labourers of India, and to do away with racial discrimination. But most of those labourers were from the untouchable classes. So it was to uplift the plight of Dalits in South Africa that Gandhi took a lot of risk to spend 21 years of his early adulthood in South Africa, although he originally went there for employment on a one-year contract.

7. More specifically, when a leper came to his door for begging, Gandhi had not the heart to dismiss him with just a meal. On the contrary, he offered the untouchable shelter, dressed his wounds and began to look after him, in his house. All this humanitarian service he did, knowing fully that the benefactor was an untouchable.[34]

8. Again, during his stay in South Africa, Gandhi had made it a rule that he and his household would personally attend to the cleaning

of the closet instead of asking or expecting the servant to do it, though the municipal sweeper removed the night soil. In fact, the servant himself lived with them as a member of the family and his children used to help him with his work.[35]

9. Gandhi's office clerks stayed with him at his residence in Durban. One of them was a Christian born of *Panchama* parents. Each room had a chamber pot which was supposed to be cleaned by his wife or himself. Usually, the clerks would clean their own pots, but the Christian clerk who was a newcomer did not know the custom and it was the duty of others to attend to his bedroom. Kasturba managed the pots of the others, but she could not mentally prepare herself for cleaning the pots used by the untouchables. She was reluctant to treat the clerk on an equal footing, since he belonged to the pariah class. But Gandhi regarding himself as a teacher of hers, insisted on her doing it cheerfully. He was so infuriated at her reluctance that he went to the extent of pushing her out of the house. Only when she began to shout: "Let us not be found to create scenes like these," he came to the senses and established peace with her, and yet without giving up his principles.[36]

10. Gandhi allowed Mr. West to stay in Phoenix settlement, the first Ashram-kind of experiment he had initiated in South Africa. A little later, West came after marrying a daughter of a leather worker. Shoemaking was clearly an untouchable's job from the Indian standpoint. So his wife as well as her family belonged to untouchable family. However, Gandhi made arrangements for such 'untouchables' (Mr. West's wife and his mother-in-law) also to stay with him freely in the Ashram.[37] Moreover, Gandhi himself learnt the job of the cobbler supposed to be an untouchable's job.

11. On his return to India, he founded the Satyagraha Ashram in Kochrab, in Ahmedabad. When an untouchable family applied to become members of his Ashram, there was so much resistance from the owner of the house that he asked Gandhi to vacate. Even at that risky point Gandhi could conscientize the fellow *ashramites* to such an extent that they all came to the decision that they "would rather go and stay in the untouchable quarters and live on whatever they get by manual labour"[38] rather than denying admission to that untouchable family. This shows Gandhi's uncompromising attitude to giving equality to untouchables even when he had to face the loss of financial support to the Ashram.

12. Still later, Gandhi adopted the daughter of that untouchable family, Laxmi, as his own.

13. Gandhi prescribed 'Removal of Untouchability' as one of the Eleven Vows for the *ashramites.* They were expected not only to observe

this vow but also to repeat at prayer every day. Their resolve to rid their mind of all traces of belief in untouchability and to fight against it.

14. Gandhi never entertained celebration of marriage in Sabarmati Ashram, because the observance of celibacy was one of the Ashram vows. However, Gandhi blessed marriages that were solemnised between caste Hindus and Harijans at the Ashram. He presided over only such marriages in the Ashram.

15. The Gujarat Vidyapith, which he founded in 1920, took a historic decision not to recognise schools that excluded untouchables. When there was so much uproar among the orthodox Hindus that they even threatened Gandhi that if the decision was not revoked they would oppose his movement against the Raj. But Gandhi published his uncompromising stand that he would even be ready to reject that freedom which would be won by abandoning the untouchables. To put it in his words:

> The advice I receive from one and all is that if I do not exclude *Antyajas* (the dalits) from the national schools, the movement for Swaraj will end in smoke. If I have even a little of the true Vaishnava in me God will also vouchsafe me the strength to reject the Swaraj which may be won by abandoning the *Antyajas*.[39]

16. Already in 1924, Gandhi, even while remaining in jail, directed Vykom Satyagraha offered by Dalits to open the roads leading to the temple. Still later he campaigned for the temple entry programmes. Gandhi fought against the belief of the *Sanatana* Hindus that the temple as well as the consecrated idol of the temple would be desecrated by the polluted souls of Dalits. He started a temple entry movement too.

17. In 1932, Gandhi endangered his life by taking up the 'epic fast' to oppose the Communal Award of the British giving the untouchables separate electorates and thereby "leaving a baneful legacy of poisoned relations, group antagonisms and separatist ideologies… discriminatory treatment and political rivalry in the legislatures, inflaming popular prejudices against the Depressed Classes."[40]

18. But again in April, 1933 Gandhi undertook twenty-one days fast to call attention to the situation of the untouchables. Despite almost unanimous medical opinion that he could not stand such a strain, he upheld his 21 days fast from May 8 to May 29. In both the fasts Gandhi staked his life for the cause of untouchables. No one can voluntarily invite slow and painful death, unless one believes that the issue at stake was a life-and-death issue for him. Both the fasts were 'intended to sting Hindu conscience for right religious action and to

root out untouchability from their minds and to make *prayachita* in ending all discriminatory practices and prejudices.'[41]

19. Still a State prisoner, Gandhi founded ***Harijan Sevak Sangh*** in September 1932, an all India organization for the uplift of the Dalits, with Birla as the chairman and Takkar Bapa as secretary to organize the work. The volunteers of this Association were dedicated to the service of Dalits, improving their housing, sanitary facilities, drinking water, education and so on. He made scavenging compulsory for all, disproving thereby the belief that one who does scavenging becomes untouchable himself. Rabindaranath Tagore, addressing a public meeting, said in support of Gandhi's mission: "Today in our determined effort, let us all join Mahatmaji in his noble task of removing the burden of the ages, the burden of disrespect upon the bent back of those who have been stigmatized for the accident of their birth…(Thus), we are not only casting off the chain of India's moral enslavement but indicating the path for all humanity."[42]

20. An 'Untouchability Abolition Week' was observed throughout India during September 27th - October 2nd 1932. A statement to the Press was issued by Sri C. Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad describing the ways of celebrating the week: "Each locality may devise its own programme but with a joint prayer every day to be a principal feature. Prayer meetings should include men and women of the so-called Depressed Classes be held in the precincts of temples. Processions to be organised by caste people into the Dalit quarters and vice versa, celebrating the heart changes and also proclaiming the glad tidings of the settlement. Throughout the week individuals should invite the Dalits to their houses for *pan supari*. Bhajan parties and Sankirtans and Kathas to be organized to which Dalits to be particularly invited. Appeals be made by literature, meetings and placards to end the untouchability. The minutes were be formally prepared and a report to be finally sent to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya."[43]

21. Gandhi identified himself totally with the untouchables. He told the Dalit leaders that he was an untouchable by choice while they were untouchables due to accident by birth. The degree of Gandhi's identification was so intense that he declared that though he desired Moksha, 'if he were to be reborn, he would be like to be reborn as an untouchable, so that he could share the sufferings and miseries and indignities that were heaped on them, and struggle for the end of all inequality in order that he may endeavour to free himself and them from that miserable condition.'[44]

22. While in Delhi, Gandhi insisted on living in the Bhangi colony, where all the dignitaries of British India had to go and meet him and

where momentous meetings of the Working Committee of the Congress were held.

23. Gandhi christened the Dalits with the name Harijan (people of God or Children of God). Thereby he wanted "to purge the common vocabulary of the derisive terms and to emphasise the human dignity and equality and thus to make them realise the fraternity." Gandhi clearly claimed that the so-called untouchables were as much entitled to dignity as others because they were as much "sparks of the Divine" as others were. In this way he wanted to make the caste Hindus realise that the depressed sections of the humanity are as much the children of God as they themselves were.

24. In February 1933, Gandhi started publishing *Harijan,* a weekly paper to promote the anti-untouchability campaign. It carried articles from his pen, exposing the shameful and humiliating status of Dalits, and repudiating the arguments of orthodox Hindus and establishing that untouchability was not an essential part of Hinduism.

25. Removal of untouchability was one of Constructive Programmes that Gandhi chalked out for the liberated India. By the way, Gandhi coined the term 'Constructive Programme' in order to indicate the "liberation for" which we must achieve before we become eligible for demanding "liberation from" the British. These programmes were described by Gandhi as the plans of self-improvement of the community by building structures, systems, processes, and resources that are alternatives to oppression and promote self-sufficiency. They were all necessary so that we will be worthy of receiving '*Poorna Swaraj* or complete independence.'[45] So, referring to untouchability, Gandhi said that it was the ugliest manifestation of violence in the social life of the Hindus. Hence, Gandhi rightly felt that "they who denied justice to those who suffered injustice at their hands had no right to demand justice for themselves from their oppressors."[46]

26. Gandhi insisted upon this idea that removal of untouchability was to be pursued as religious practice. It meant that the so-called caste Hindus had to overcome their superstitious belief in untouchability namely the idea of pollution by the touch of a person by reason of his birth, and that they must allow the temple entry to the 'untouchables.' Moreover, the reforms such as opening of the roads, temples, public wells, and public schools to the 'untouchables' equally with the caste Hindus"[47] must be carried out with a religious fervour and for a religious goal namely to root out untouchability from their minds, and to make penitential amends, "*prayachitta* because those whom they had subjected to discrimination and indignities were as much sparks of the divine as they themselves were."[48] As for himself,

he confessed:

> I would not exploit you for gaining *Swaraj.* I am anxious to see an end put to untouchability because for me it is an expiation and a penance. Hinduism has committed a great sin in giving sanction to this evil and I am anxious if such a thing as vicarious penance is possible to purify it of that sin by expiating for it in my own person.[49]

27. In framing the Congress Constitution, Gandhi made it a condition precedent for anybody joining the national organization that he declare himself against untouchability. This was also incorporated in the annual pledge that every congressman had to take.[50] "If Hindu Congressmen take up the cause for its own sake, (i.e. not merely as a political necessity but as indispensable for the very existence of Hinduism) they will influence the so-called *Sanatanists* far more extensively than they have hitherto done.[51] They should approach them not in a militant spirit but, as befits their non-violence, in a spirit of friendliness.

28. Gandhi devoted nearly a year to the Harijan Tour[52] only for the uplift of the Dalits. He addressed hundreds of meetings exhorting the Hindus to take to Harijan uplift in expiation of their sin of oppression and exploitation of their brethren for centuries. He repudiated their ideas of people being high or low by birth. At every place he appealed to the rich and poor to donate their mite, himself stretching out his hand for contributions. The magic appeal was so touching that women and girls who came to attend the meetings parted with their ornaments too. The orthodox Hindus were no doubt infuriated by this new movement. They raised a lot of controversies in dailies, accusing him of heresy. They tried to provoke violence and thereby discredit the 'apostle of nonviolence.' Bombs were thrown.[53] But the undaunted Gandhi said: "I am not aching for martyrdom, but if it comes in my way in the prosecution of what I consider to be the supreme duty in defence of the faith I hold in common with millions of Hindus, I shall have well-earned it."[54]

Gandhi could take all these steps because for him his whole political involvement was an expression of his deepest sense of religion. This religious aspect came out at the time of the Epic Fast he carried out in the Yeravada Jail. When an American journalist had sent a cable to Gandhi saying that American opinion was profoundly be fuddled by his fast. They could not understand his willfully throwing away his 'undisputed political leadership of Indian nationalism by starving to death." To this, Gandhi sent a long cable in which he has brought out his religious dimension much more pointedly:

> Americans should know that my politics are derived from my religion. If God had ordained death by starvation I know that it will set last seal on my political leadership. Nationalism will be stronger for sacrificial death. Vast majority of Indian community has instinctively realized correctness and implications of this fast. I am convinced that real self-government has been advanced by this penance and if God gives me strength to see this fast through without mind or body wavering, advancement will be still greater. Hence, every day well passed in equilibrium brings *swaraj* nearer as it can by no other steps. This preparation for death for untouchability is veritable preparation for death for whole of India. For me removal of untouchability is integral part of *swaraj*. I would reject *swaraj* that excluded meanest sinfullest Indians from its health giving balm. For me religion is one in essence. But it has many branches and if I the Hindu branch fail in my duty to the parent trunk I am an unworthy follower of that one invisible religion. According to this reasoning *my sacrifice promotes deliverance of humanity from untouchability in every shape or form*[55] and therefore it served all religious groups.[56]

Thanks to the massive effort he organized, Gandhi felt that orthodoxy was losing ground. However, he also felt the difficulty implied in this venture. To Nehru, Gandhi wrote these words: "The abuses they are hurling at me are wonderfully refreshing. I am all that is bad and corrupt on this earth. But the storm will subside ... It is the *death dance of the moth round a lamp.*"[57] It is no wonder that just as he expected, so did some *sanatanists* make a few attempts on his life. An attempt was made to kill Gandhi in Jasidih in Bihar. In 1934, a bomb was thrown at Gandhi as he was proceeding to the Municipal Hall in Pune. Then on January 20, 1948, when Gandhi was conducting the prayer meeting in the garden in Birla House, in New Delhi, a youth by name Madan Lal, a refugee from West Punjab, a member of a gang which plotted Gandhi's death threw a bomb at Gandhi, but missed the target. The final one was by Nathu Ram Godse, Madan Lal's fellow conspirator from Pune, a primary membership holder of RSS. He came to Gandhi's prayer meeting in the garden of Birla House on 30th January and shot at him from a distance of three feet. This shows that Gandhi gave his life for the cause of Dalit liberation, fighting against the Hindu oxthodoxy.

It is worth quoting the following words of Gandhi to grasp what he really did for removal of untouchability:

> Harijan service will be always after my heart and will be the breath of life for me, more precious than the daily bread. I can live for some days at least without the daily bread, but I cannot live without Harijan service for one single minute. It is a constant prayer to the Almighty that this blot of untouchability may be removed in its entirety from Hindustan… My

life is a dedication to this cause and I shall consider no penance too great for the vindication of this Truth.[58]

Can anyone doubt the sincerity of the person and question the veracity of the words quoted above? Ambedkar for one never denied Gandhi's sincerity of purpose in his efforts to uplift Dalits. That is why he could give a glorious tribute to Gandhi that 'he knew of no other person who had done so much for the untouchable' while addressing the Rajya Sabha in 1954, in the evening of his life.[59] Unfortunately, the so-called Ambedkarites have forgotten their own master's estimation of Gandhi.

PART 3 : THE CASTE QUESTION

There is no gainsaying of the major cleavage of ideas Gandhi and Ambedkar on the caste question. Ambedkar thought that caste was embedded in the Hindu Society and that it was sanctioned by the Hindu Shastras and that it was all the manipulation of the Brahminic hegemony, and hence Ambedkar was decisive in his opinion that untouchability cannot be removed unless the caste system as a whole is annihilated in Hinduism.[60]

In July 1936, Gandhi wrote articles under the title "A Vindication of Caste" in his weekly journal *Harijan*, in which he made comments on Ambedkar's views. With his replies to Gandhi's comments, Ambedkar brought out a second edition in 1937, with a new title: *Annihilation of Caste: With a Reply to Mahatma Gandhi*. Later in 1944, Ambedkar published a third edition, incorporating into it another essay of his "Castes in India, their Origin and their Mechanism," which appeared in the issue of the *Indian Antiquary Journal* of May 1917. Finally, he also declared in a meeting of the suppressed classes his decision for conversion too: "Because we have the misfortune of calling ourselves Hindus, we are treated thus. … However, it is not my fault; but I will not die a Hindu, for this is in my power."

It is impossible to deal with the whole controversy within the limited scope of this paper. But at least a few indicators may be given in understanding the caste question. Herein, I would like to give a few comments at three levels: (a) Gandhi's personal viewpoint about Scriptural authority (b) about the distinction between Varna and caste and (c) the personality differences.

3.1. Gandhi's Personal Viewpoint on Scriptural Authority

First of all, it must be borne in mind that Gandhi was talking to his

Hindu fellow believers rather than addressing Ambedkar directly. Hence, his differing views need not be taken as directed against Ambedkar.

Secondly, we must note that though he accepted the Shastras, he did not accept any statement just because it appeared in them. Very pointedly he said: "I accept no authority or Shastra as an infallible guide."[61] For, there are bound to be many interpolations, Gandhi said. The only way to find out whether it is an interpolation or not can be understood on the basis of the following criteria:

(1) It should satisfy trained reason.

(2) It should satisfy the canons of morality, i.e. Truth and Non-violence,

(3) It should not be repugnant to the conscience of a spiritually disciplined person.

Now, applying these tests, Gandhi rejected all those statements which sanctioned untouchability. There were many reformers who, right from the time of Buddha, have attacked untouchability. Hindu reformers in the middle Ages also tried to abolish it through systematic campaigns against this inhuman custom. The Sikh Gurus have always emphasised the equality of all human beings so much that even the so called untouchables have been recognized as Guru. The sects of *Sant Mat* from about the 13th century and Kabir from 15th century were all opposed to the qualitative distinctions of the Hindu caste system, and to those between Hindus and Muslims and advocated egalitarian system of society. But they were all appealing to religious sentiments only.

However, there was none before Gandhi who succeeded in shaking the very foundations of belief in untouchability. Challenging the *pandits* and *achariyas* on their understanding and interpretations of Hindu beliefs and practices, Gandhi said:

- Let us not deceive ourselves with the belief that everything that is written in Sanskrit and printed in *Shastras* has any binding effect upon us. That which is opposed to the fundamental maxims of morality, that which is opposed to trained reason, cannot be claimed as *Shastras* no matter how ancient it may be.[62]
- I have no hesitation in rejecting the scriptural authority of a doubtful character in order to support a sinful institution (the untouchability).[63]
- I hold *manusmrithi* as part of *sashtras* but that does not mean, that I swear by every word that is printed in the book described as *manusmrithi*. There are so many contradictions in the printed volume that, if you accept one part, you are bound to reject those parts that are wholly inconsistent with it.[64]

- I accept no authority or Shastra as an infallible guide.[65]

3.2. Distinction Between Class and Caste

Next, coming to the more controversial issue of caste system, Gandhi makes a distinction between caste and *varna*. Claiming himself to be a *Sanatana* Hindu, Gandhi does not want to throw overboard the age-old *varnashrama* system as a general framework of Hindu society that has kept it safe for centuries. But he readily agreed that 'there were some anomalies and shibboleths that have been used by the dominant sections to exploit the weaker sections of society.'[66] He does not accept caste system in a general frame work of classes which are purely profession-based.

In this light, then, Gandhi's emphasis was on the abolition of 'oppression of caste'rather than the 'abolition of caste system' in the sense of *varna*. He looks at caste as providing an occupation-based sustenance of society, but he voiced from house top that untouchability be removed by all means. The so-called caste oppression is the distortion of *Varna* System rather than itself being defective in its very nature.

> Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do not know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth.[67]

It may be significant to note that the famous Greek philosopher Plato in his *Republic* has talked about the fourfold class structure of society as a necessary framework of the peaceful life in society: the service class, the trader-class, the warrior-class, and the class of philosopher-king. It is almost in parallel lines that one can see the *chaturvana* of Indian categories of society: *Shudras, Vaisyas*, *Kshatriyas* and the *Brahmins*.

We do not know whether Gandhi had studied Plato or not. However, his acceptance of *varna* system as a profession-based division comes close to Plato's position. The untouchables, considered as *Avarnas,* is certainly specific to India alone. It might have originated because of various reasons of morality and purity of lifestyle. Whatever was the real reason, Gandhi vehemently opposed the practice of untouchability in all aspects. He said:

> I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap on progress. Nor do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. We need to think of, and to assert, equality because we see great inequalities

> in the physical world. Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man.[68]

Gandhi was convinced that once the untouchability went, the process of abolition of caste would have begun. Hence, Gandhi was pragmatically working almost exclusively for the removal of untouchability. Eight years after Gandhi's death, Nehru would tell a European journalist by name Tibor Mende:

> I asked [Gandhi] repeatedly: why don't you hit out at the caste system directly? He said, 'I am undermining it completely by tackling untouchability.'... [Gandhi's] genius lay in finding the weakest point of the enemy, the breaking of his front.[69]

3.3. The Diverse Personality Traits of Gandhi and Ambedkar

Finally, it may be beneficial to glean the differences in the personalities of Gandhi and Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar was a systematically trained academic, bent upon scientific style of writing and argumentation. Whenever he wrote anything, he devoted himself fully to present his arguments cogently and convincingly. On the contrary, Gandhi was more an activist, rather than a systematic writer. He had neither time nor the temperament for a systematic and legalistic presentation of arguments. All his writings were non-academic in style, fragmentary in nature and oriented to a context.

Further, Gandhi being a spiritualist in outlook and approach, often took recourse to spiritual approaches towards the analysis of problems. He was interested in making moral and normative appeals to people in solving the problems. But Ambedkar had too little appreciation for such an approach to life. He was interested in solving the problems somehow, and in finding practical and concrete ways of solutions rather than appealing to people's moral sense. To win the interests of Dalits, it was important for him to pursue different kinds of strategies, whether it meant negotiating with foreign rulers or ensuring Constitutional provisions in Independent India.

Besides, the standpoints of the two leaders were diametrically opposed to each other. Gandhi claimed to represent the Indian people as a whole, rather than any segment. This was "an inevitable aspect of the construction of the Indian Nation," and therefore it was an impossibility for Gandhi to claim an Indian nation and at the same time to cede ground to different communities as separate political communities.[70] On the contrary, Ambedkar clearly and firmly showed

himself as the leader of the Dalits only. To bring about their emancipation from the caste Hindus, the Brahminic hegemony, Ambedkar experimented with protests, marches etc. and finally thought of getting political power from the British by negotiating with them for separate electorates, just like the Sikhs and Muslims.

If, in the light of their common national interest and quest for achieving better humanity for all, their diversity of approaches are studied, we will be able to make better sense of their ideas, approaches and standpoints, going beyond the temporal particularities. Again for Gandhi, the change of heart among caste Hindus was a crucial element of anti-untouchability programme. As against Ambedkar's view that the untouchability was a stigma which the Dalits need to get rid of, Gandhi held that it was the sin of the caste Hindus, which they need to accept and purify themselves from as well make repentance for.

Ambedkar was depending upon the political strategies only. But Gandhi was making use of both political and religious platforms to make a thorough eradication of the evil of untouchability.

> To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindu owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of 'untouchables' but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the 'untouchability,' not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us, superior Hindus, to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our downtrodden brethren whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression.[71]

Gandhi's position revealed that untouchability could not be removed by force or law. He was convinced that the Dalits' salvation could come not through the machinery of law, but through intensive social reform of caste prejudice and custom, which was more powerful than the law. The mere award of separate electorate, on the other hand, would make the bar a group emblem and prompt then to organize 'untouchability' into a powerful vested interest. It would never deal with a baneful legacy of poisoned relations, group antagonism and separatist ideologies. It might even end with creating a bigger, vaster edition of the American Negro problem in India.[72]

3.4. The Common Enemy of the Dalits and Gandhi

Thus, the two great minds were keen on tackling the one evil of Hinduism, but each from a different perspective. The discussion in this part reveals that the whole controversy is traced to a wrong association that Ambedkar made between Hinduism and Brahmanism, Casteist oppression as intrinsic to Hinduism on the one hand and

misconstruing Gandhi as an ardent advocate of Hinduism on the other. It is true that Gandhi claimed himself to be a *'sanatana* Hindu,' yet he reinterpreted Hinduism in such a way as to openly denounce Brahminism for causing untouchability, not necessarily the caste framework of Hinduism. Though he accepted *varnarshrama dharma* as an ideal framework of society, he severely condemned untouchability as sinful, satanic, and without the sanction of the *Shastras.*

In this process the common enemy was identified by both the leaders correctly: the Brahminic hegemony. In fact he openly said, the untouchability was the fruit of the "selfish Brahmindom." The difference between Gandhi and Ambedkar is that Gandhi identifies himself with Hinduism devoid of Brahminism and distortions like untouchability. On the contrary, Ambedkar identified whole of Hinduism with Brahminism, being the cause of Casteism, as well as untouchability.

If the Ambedkarites forget this commonality between their leader and Gandhi and if in their effort to making Ambedkar as the sole icon of Dalit liberation, and in the process they are keen on disparaging Gandhi or even ignoring the efforts that Gandhi made to emancipate the Dalits through his eradication of untouchability, then there arises the risk of ignoring the common enemy and getting involved in the tussle between the two camps, both of which had Dalit emancipation as the only goal. Today, therefore, there is a greater urgency on the part of both the camps (Gandhiites and Ambedkarites) to befriend each other, to empower each other and to confront the common enemy, rather than indulge in mutual bickering.

CONCLUSION

Gandhi did not think that individual or group mobilisation and mobility would solve the problem. What he aimed at was fundamental changes in the attitudes of the caste Hindus, and the need to absorb the untouchables into the main fabric of Hinduism. While the British, at least some of them, were determined to divide India along caste and religious lines, Gandhi was quick to perceive it and decided to put an end to such a plot of the colonizers, and made it clear to them that we would decide our future. And in fact Art.17 of the Constitution abolishes untouchability. If both the Ambedkarite and Gandhian groups come to acknowledge the fact that both Gandhi and Ambedkar had the same goal although the path to achieving it only differed, there is greater possibility of appreciating their complementarity in the cause of Dalit liberation.

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52. Gandhi's Harijan Tour began on Nov. 7, 1933 and ended in August 1934, Cf. J.B. Kripalani,.pp.154-155.
53. For instance, when Gandhi was marching towards the Municipal Hall in Pune, a bomb was thrown in which his party members were injured.
54. As quoted in J.B. Kripalani, *op.cit*. p.155.
55. The phrase with an added emphasis here may be understood as the 'vicarious suffering.'
56. *CWMG*, vol. 51, pp.,128-129.
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65. *Young India*, 29 Sep.1927.
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68. As cited by Ravindra Varma, *op.cit*. p.8.
69. As cited by Mende himself, 1958.
70. It was also understandable because it was he who changed the elitist party of the Congress into the mass movement of India, and it was he who mobilized the whole of the country to rise against the foreign rule. It was not only thanks to his charisma but also to his total identification with the poorest of the poor in every respect that he made the cause of freedom from the foreign rule as cry of the masses. Again it was his inspiration that the subcontinent, even after the partition of Pakistan, could remain India rather than becoming Hindustan.
71. as quoted in J.B. Kripalani, *op.cit*. p. 184.

72. Pyarelal,*op.cit.,* p.15.

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Violence, Peace, Self and Others: A Philosophical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

So far peace has been conceived and discussed in the context of war in Western thought. But peace can be both a state of mind, as well as a state of society, so that every kind of violence, from world war to terrorism, inter-community strife, as well as every day conflicts between neighbours and even within a family, is opposed to peace and harmony. The biggest source of violence is man's ego, the sense of selfhood pitted against all other selves. One's self or ego depends upon its level of identification, first with one's family, and later on with one's community, howsoever that community may be defined. The remedy lies in perceiving and emphasizing our commonalities, affinity to each other, as well as our interdependence.

Key words: peace, violence, self, other, ego

I Violence as the Negation of Peace

SOMEHOW WAR AND PEACE are paired in our thinking as night and day. So, whenever we talk of peace, it is invariably in the context of international violence. Often, peace efforts are defended in the context of nuclear war, or nuclear weapons, as if any violence other than one at a global stage is not important. However, the scale of violence alone cannot be the criterion, though it may still be important, for judging the desirability or otherwise of violence or peace. Of course, wars fought on a big scale not only cause death and suffering to millions but also result in the destruction of normal life for a long time after that. Cruelty perpetrated during wars dehumanizes the warring parties. But we need not confine our understanding of violence

to large scale wars.

Violence of every kind is the reatest challenge to peace. Simply said, violence is the counterpoise of peace. Violence can be of different forms, intensity and extension. It can be the violence perpetrated in wars, involving maximum deaths and destruction, as also inhuman cruelty. It can be violence expressed in acts of terrorism, which again can be different in their motivation, extension, and the cruelty involved. Equally significant is the violence that is perpetrated by the hooligans upsetting community life. Violence during the partition of India resulted in the death and displacement of millions, which they say was equal to a world war. Since independence, we have seen considerable violence in India, some verging on genocide of the targeted community. I personally feel that violence practiced in inter-community riots is more cruel and reprehensible than even the violence and death as a result of terrorist acts. It is so because in rioting the predators stand and watch the intense suffering of their victims whom they are murdering or burning alive. Not only in India, but in most Arab or Islamic countries, from Afghanistan, Iraq to Sudan and Morocco, intercommunity violence which spares no one and involves acts of inhuman ferocity has become a commonplace. However, the counter measures against terrorism taken by the Western powers led by the U.S., through bombing and destroying the entire populace, is as inhuman as the terrorism they aim at restraining.

I. 2. Violence and the Perception of the "Other" as an Alien

In order to understand peace and try to realize it, we must first understand the nature and causes of violence. Peace, though a very positive state of mind and society, would naturally ensue when causes of conflict and violence are eliminated. The biggest challenge to peace comes from the human tendency of looking at others with suspicion and hatred. Or rather, the final source and basis of violence in society or in the world is the human ego, the sense of one's own self as the most important thing in the world, pitted against all others. Existentialist thinkers, such as Martin Heidegger, stress first that the self defines itself only in relation to other selves, and being related to other selves is an essential aspect, or even constitutive of the self, and second , they also contend that the one can never have real contact with the other selves.[1] J.P. Sartre emphasized the essential solitariness of the individual, and that the other selves are a challenge for the very being of my self.[2] We need not agree with their version of the nature of self and its necessary conflict with others. But it is a matter of every day experience that most people act in a way that would further the interests of their own selves.

Philosophers have admitted that there is nothing irrational in acting according to considerations of expedient self-interest.[3] But this natural tendency of human beings is different from the often aggressive assertion of self which rejects interests of all others as irrelevant. We may not be conscious of this, but most of us do feel and act in that way.

The boundaries of the self are extended from the beginning to include family members, or those whom we love or care for. Most of the time, this sense of selfhood is further extended to include either one's friends or those who share one's thoughts and ideology. Finally, one often identifies oneself with one's community, though the conception of community being so varied that the emotional attachment with it may be more or less, which would determine whether it may be included in the understanding of the self of itself.

In the West, the idea of the community is given great prominence, but their understanding of the very idea and criterion of community is so varied that perhaps no real inclusion of it in the idea of self occurs. On the other hand, in India, religious community and caste become the basis of one's identification with all the people belonging to one's religion or caste. (It is another matter that when it is a question of pursuing self-interest, understood in the narrower sense, all other considerations are forgotten.). Some of the existentialists asserted that nation is the final basis of not only one's community but also of one's selfhood. But such a distorted point of view can have dangerous results. Heidegger later supported Fascist regime and Sartre became a fanatic communist.

Bernard Gert has rightly contended that nationalism is one of the two biggest sources of violence and war, which is true. But he cites religion as an equally strong basis of creating conflict and violence.[4] I believe that there is need for distinguishing between the core or basic faith of a given religion, and its peripheral matters.[5] John Hick has forcefully argued that religion as such, or the fundamental faith and creed of religion, does not preach violence; but when it develops and is interpreted under changed historical circumstances, it may lead to conflict and violence.[6] For example, even if it is noted that Islam is fully anti-violence, the way the contemporary Islamic terrorists are going about killing innocent people goes against many injunctions of the *Quran*. And those Hindu fanatics who indulge in violence and rioting against the minorities and project Hinduism as an aggressive religion go against every possible tenet of Hinduism.

Inter-religious community conflicts are called "communalism" in India, though in the West community fellow feeling is given a positive connotation. I have argued elsewhere that the very division of the

populace into majority and minority falsifies everyday reality. Conflict between any two communities based merely on their religious faith falsifies the lived reality in which members of the two communities share innumerable secular interests and even identities.[7] Now, caste has become an equally strong criterion for dividing the populace into innumerable communities.

Whatever the basis of our conceptualization of community, there are two necessary ingredients of it— first, all people who are supposed to belong to that community are understood to have homogeneous nature, culture, and secular interests; and second, these secular interests are declared to be necessarily against those of other communities; or rather, their interests are understood to be necessarily contradictory to those of one's community.[8] This fallacious reading of the ground reality leads to mutual distrust, hostility, and conflict, and finally violence, thus disrupting the peace of the country. It is motivated by an equally fallacious sense of identity, whether of the individual or that of the so-called community.

The same happens in the case of international conflicts. It is presumed that other nations and their interests are in some basic sense different from and contradictory to those of one's nation. Alternatively, a people's ego or sense of identity becomes so strong, that they as a nation start thinking that they belong to some superior race or level. Thus Hitler's and his followers' megalomania of belonging to some superior Aryan race led both to the genocide of millions of Jews and to the Second World War resulting in unprecedented death of millions and destruction all round.

Now the U.S. thinks and acts in the same way. Its sense of identity has grown so strong and megalomaniac that it considers itself the guardian of the whole world. Also it considers its own world view and values as paradigmatic and expects all other nations to follow them. Finally it constantly asserts its status as the most powerful nation in the world to whom all others must owe alliance. The U.S. (and to a lesser extent other Western countries) also suffers from Islam phobia, and so it is ready to attack and destroy any people whom it considers as going not only against its interests but also against its values and norms. This megalomania of one nation has resulted in several wars and unthinkable misery of millions of people in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Post-modern cultural relativism has emphasized the disparity of cultures and languages, so much that a person belonging to one culture and speaking one language is not supposed to even understand what the other is trying to say! They talk of the integrity of every culture which seems to make the whole culture and its people like the

"monads" of Leibniz.[9] It is not that the nations or groups fighting with each other are inspired by their philosophy; nor is their philosophy right or true to historical facts. And yet we or our political leaders do exaggerate differences in cultures, or conflict in the interests of different cultures or nations.

One other source of violence is the fundamentalism of certain religions. Interestingly, this fundamentalism is directed not against the "other" but towards their own people. Earlier Catholic church practised this fundamentalism, forcing its own people to act against all their natural instincts and interests. Islamic fundamentalism, largely aimed at women, was always there, but in contemporary context feels all the more stark and violent. In Hinduism, the injunctions and prohibitions of the *Dharmashastras* were equally prone to be cruel or violent; but Hindus have gradually succeeded in shaking off those restricting injunctions in secular matters, though other religious dogmas and practices are followed enthusiastically. Probably, fundamentalism originates in the urge for power on the part of Christian and Islamic clergy, as well as the Brahmins of Hinduism, who shamelessly appropriated the status of being similar to Gods for themselves. Any kind of fundamentalism which forces its injunctions and prohibitions with cruelest possible sanctions and threats of punishments for their transgression is an equal source of violence.

Fanaticism is an extreme version of fundamentalism, and when combined with communalism in the Indian sense results in worse type of intercommunity violence. Probably it also originates in some people's urge for power over others, whether belonging to other religion or their own. Sometimes fanatics' urge for power results in extreme violence against their own people, as is happening in Islamic countries all over the world, or even in India. Whether it is the violence perpetrated by Islamic groups against rival sects, or it is violence in the name of some false ideology, as in the Naxalite violence against equally poor innocent policemen, or any one else whom they suspect to be against them, they are all equally evil and violate prospects of peace.

One thing more. Generally, if we talk of violence, we talk of either violence in wars, or in the contemporary world, violence of terrorism. But the violence that is perpetrated against other groups of the same society, as in Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and India, in the form of rioting, killing, burning alive of one's neighbours, is far more cruel, as the perpetrators of violence enjoy the intense suffering of their victims. This kind of violence must turn its perpetrators into inhuman satanic beings. When they later mingle in society, they must inspire and infuse their brutality in others, thus

transforming the largely peaceful people into aggressive hateful and violent lot. This results in the general increase of violence in the whole society. There cannot be a worst source of permanent destruction of peace and harmony in society.

Whether it is a group which perceives other groups, identified on the basis of either religion, or caste, or region, as a challenge to their secular growth, or it is a nation which regards the development or different culture of other nations as a challenge to its culture and power, leading to hostility and violence among groups and nations, its basis is always the perception of the other group or nation as the "other," an alien with whom no meaningful dialogue is possible, only way being that of strife and war.

Now-a-days we are confronted by a new kind of violence — violence against women. Cruelty and inhumanity involved in the rape and subsequent murder of women and small girls, often 4 to 6 years old, is so inhuman and demonic that our souls shudder even to think of that. What is the source of such Satanic violence? Recently we are faced, especially in North India, a new kind of violence, popularly called 'road rage.' This is expressed in burgeoning to death the "offending party," even if the victim's crime may be scratching the car of the predator. Possibly, the perpetrators of such crimes do not see their victims as some one like themselves; or it is some fiendish desire for power over their victims. However, the disproportion and inhuman cruelty of this new kind of violence is impossible to understand.

II The Nature and Sources of Peace

There are two main ways to counter violence and ensure peace. As violence is the greatest obstruction to peace, in Indian thought the most fundamental value is *ahimsa* or non-violence. Non-violence is conceived as a comprehensive virtue; it includes not hurting others by bodily action, speech and even thought (as hatred, envy etc.). The values of *ahimsa* and peace (*shanti*) lie in an attitude of total goodwill towards others, whether friend or enemy. The idea of *ahimsa* can become the basis of a philosophy of universal compassion, as in Buddhism. In fact, the values of *ahimsa*, friendliness and universal compassion are extolled in the texts of every Indian religion and philosophy.[10]

The creed of non-violence is inspired by a conscious or subconscious recognition of similarity and affinity between human beings. This is the second requirement of peace — that of recognizing similarities between different groups and nations for the simple reason that the people belonging to different cultures are all human beings.

And human beings live, die and suffer, as well as enjoy the things of life in very similar ways.

Vedanta has declared that finally all beings, everything in the universe have their source and ground in one Absolute; rather every being and every thing is the same as the Absolute (Atman-Brahman). If so, there should remain no basis for differentiation between oneself and others, far less any basis of violence against others. Unfortunately, Brahmanic Hinduism failed to translate this vision in real life, and neither condemned violence, nor the division of human beings on the basis of hierarchical *varnas*.

Though Indians failed to realize in practice their idealistic philosophy of fundamental unity of all living beings; still there was a general repeated assertion of equality of all human beings, the value of impartiality and friendliness towards all. The *Bhagvadgita* advises without reference to any religious belief that "we must understand all human beings on the analogy of oneself, that is akin to oneself (*atmopamyena sarvatra*..)."[11] The real idea is that if we consider other human beings like ourselves, there would remain no basis for enmity and conflict between man and man.

However, it was only later in middle ages that the infusion of theistic devotional (*Bhakti)* cult transformed Hinduism. Most *bhakta* saints asserted that all human beings are equal before God. Kabir went one step further and rejected all man-made differences. He told his contemporary Hindus who practised caste differences, that if Brahmins are a superior race, how is it that they are born in a similar manner to other humans, and not in another unique manner. He also rejected religious-ritualistic distinctions as irrelevant, and told the *maulvis* that if circumcision is a sign of being a Muslim, why were all Muslims not born circumcised.?[12] The idea was that all human beings are absolutely equal and akin to each other. They are born, live and die in the same way. And, therefore, declared Kabir, 'since all beings are born of one *Nur* (Glory), or one *Jyoti* (Divine Light), we cannot differentiate between Hindus and Turks, Brahmins and Shudras (extreme lower caste), or even between good and bad.[13] If so there remains no reason for declaring any one's superiority over others, far less for killing each other. Kabir passionately condemned all inter-community killings, as also killing of animals in the name of religion.[14] His single minded message was that basically all living beings (and not only human beings) are made of the same stuff — blood, meat, sperm, etc.[15] It is significant that even though Kabir was an intensely religious person, most of his diatribe against man-made distinctions is based on empirical or secular arguments. The central idea of Kabir is the fundamental affinity of all living beings, which awareness leaves

no scope for mutual hatred or violence.

Buddhism, as well as Jainism which was older, emphasized non-violence as the most basic virtue. Both denied a creator God, while Buddhism also denied the soul. Later Mahayana Buddhism developed the idea that if there are no souls, then there is no basis for the distinction between oneself and another; and no basis for pursuing the interests of some one person at the cost of others.[16] Inasmuch as it is the ego or pursuit of one's interests at the cost of others which is the cause of all conflicts between humans, this leaves no scope for violence and conflict. Buddhism has given *karuna* (compassion) a central place in its ethics and even world-view. It inspired king Ashoka to eschew all violence and war and spread the message of peace.

Christ not only proclaimed equality of all human beings, but also gave the message of love of all, as they are children of the same Father.[17] But under the influence of Judaic fanaticism he often made drastic distinction between the "chosen" of the Father and those who are condemned to hell.[18] St. Augustine reiterated this distinction; and middle ages saw large-scale violence and persecution in the name of religion.

Unfortunately, we tend to see differences more, and the underlying affinities less. It is only the discerning soul who is able to see the basic affinity between human beings. It can be objected that we cannot realize peace in the secular multi-cultural world by referring to the varied teachings of religion which sometimes even lend themselves to the cause of violence.[19] In response, we can refer first, to human experience of natural empathy for other human beings, and second, to the views of various philosophers.

Several modern philosophers have acknowledged that not hurting others is the most fundamental value, or duty of humankind. However, the real help for peace comes from a genuine awareness of the affinity between all human beings. Thus, David Hume declared in 17th century that there is a fundamental similarity between all human beings. Moreover, all have the sentiment of sympathy in their bosoms which makes them empathize with the suffering of other human beings; and approve all moral actions which aim at relieving that suffering.[20] It is true that most humans are capable of sympathy, but this sentiment often remains clouded by one's egoism making normal persons act in a way which will harm the interests of others.

Immanuel Kant is regarded as not only an uncompromising rationalist but also as an absolutist in ethics who denied any role to human emotions. But the same Kant has advocated not only the equality and dignity of all humans due to their essential rationality and humanity, equal claimants of respect from others — which leaves

no scope for privileges or using others as means of our self interests, which is the main cause of all strife and violence in the world.[21] He also emphasizes our duty to do as much as we can to help other human beings. He goes one step further and contends that someone doing good to another must not think or show that she has done something great, as by helping others we are only restoring the injustice of the society which has reduced those people to a deprived state.[22] To quote him:

"The maxim of common interest, of beneficence towards those in need is a universal duty of people, just because they are to be considered fellow humans, that is rational beings with needs, united by nature in one dwelling place, so that they can help one another."[23]

The fundamental need for peace both at micro and macro levels is this recognition of basic similarity between man and man. Politicians and even common men are ever ready to cry out war against some perceived enemy. But sitting secure and comfortable in their offices and homes, they have no idea how much suffering the soldiers fighting the politicians' war have to undergo. And of course they refuse to understand that the soldiers and people of the "enemy" country suffer as much as ours do. There is no difference between a wounded soldier lying unaided somewhere, whether he belongs to this country or another. His suffering, and the suffering of his dear ones if he does not return are exactly the same as the sufferings on our side. Modern wars, practiced by the U.S. are still worse, as the perpetrators of violence do not suffer, sometimes do not even see what sufferings they have unleashed by dropping bombs on whom they consider their enemy and the neighbouring population of innocent civilians.

All this violence and war is caused by the failure of the perpetrators of violence to recognize that after all the victims of their violence are human beings similar to them, both in their suffering and their simple desires for life. This affinity between human beings and the absolute equality between them is the foundation of the Golden Rule, especially in its negative form: "Do not do to others what you would not like to be done to you by others." The Golden Rule, in both its negative and positive forms, is found in all world religions.[24] More important, various ethicists, having argued their way for justifying a way of moral duty, finally end up endorsing the Golden Rule. Henry Sidgwick has famously declared: "It cannot be right for A to treat B in a manner in which it would be wrong for B to treat A.."[25] The basic idea is that the powerful and clever people and nations cannot be accepted as riding over the interests of others simply because they think themselves as supreme, whose interests override the interests of all

others.

Philosophers have talked of universalizability which is a necessity of all rational thinking. So, we cannot demand special rights for ourselves which we deny to others in similar circumstances. R. M. Hare, has argued that a person who is being unjust and cruel to another person must be asked to imagine himself in the position of the victim of his actions, and then tell how he would feel if he was treated in the way he is treating the other person. He contends that this argument should be sufficient for the agent to desist from whatever he is contemplating against the other.[26] Putting oneself in another's place is the mantra of peace and harmony. Hare goes on to argue that it is logically demanded that if a person or a group thinks that he/ they have a right for a particular privilege, or a course of action which would harm the interests of others, then they are contradicting themselves if he/they refuse that others are entitled to treat them in a similar way.[27] Hare refers to the utilitarian principle that each person is to be counted as one and no one should be more than one. He goes on to contend that the interests of all persons must be considered equally.[28] But why this should be so is not clear in Hare's account.

Sidgwick had earlier declared that the interests of all human beings are same from the point of view of the universe.[29] Sidgwick was a utilitarian who believed in the equal value of all individuals, and an intuitionist. He said:

'I find that I undoubtedly seem to perceive, as clearly and certainly as I see an axiom in arithmetic or geometry, that it is "right " and "reasonable" for me to treat others as I think that I myself ought to be treated under similar conditions, and to do what I believe to be ultimately conducive to the universal Good or happiness.'[30]

Other Western philosophers have equally stressed the fact that basically all humans are similar in their needs, goals, emotional responses to various life situations, etc.

We can tell the perpetrator of violence, whether they are the politicians and generals of some powerful nations like America; or are terrorists of any and every hue — that the victims of your violence are just like you; and if you imagine yourself in their place, you would feel that you would not like to suffer as your actions are making them suffer. (There can be some fanatic terrorists who would not be moved by this argument. They are permanent threats to peace. We cannot do anything about them.).

There are many other thinkers who have used the fact of affinity between human beings as the basis for justifying moral duty. W. T. Stace points out that we exaggerate differences, whereas human

nature is basically the same everywhere. Man's fundamental needs – physical, mental and moral — are the same everywhere.[31] Hence, the Golden Rule expresses the essence of morality, as well as we may add, the essential path to peace.

We can derive the maxim of toleration from the Golden Rule, toleration in every field of life — from religious to social, cultural, and international relations. Mahatma Gandhi gave the twin messages of universal toleration and *ahimsa*. Intolerance of others' ways breeds violence. Therefore, the remedy of violence is toleration and *ahimsa*. And *ahimsa* " requires a large heart, otherwise called charity. Let us do unto others as we would that they should do unto us."[32] Gandhi cautioned that "Toleration is not a coinciding of views. There should be toleration of one another's views, though they may be poles apart…"[33] Mahatma mostly spoke in the context of religious conflicts, and repeatedly declared that "Truth is the exclusive property of no one." We can apply this principle in the context of Westerners' intolerance of other cultures and mores. Same could be said of the intolerance and hatred of various Muslim fanatic groups killing each other, often in the name of religion.

We can call this approach of tolerance as a liberal approach to life and its various conflicts. Finally, justice is the most important value. The value of justice has been recognized better in Western cultures than in Asian ones, perhaps because of the restraining influence of cultural norms in the latter. From Socrates to John Rawls, justice has been emphasized and elaborated as a means of social harmony in the West. For want of space we would leave out earlier concepts of justice and only refer to Rawls.' As is well known, Rawls understood justice as equality of, or equal opportunity for, all human beings in a socio-political structure in which the interests of the most under-privileged are taken care of.[34] And when masses are deprived of this justice, there results a disruption of peace. The latter may not be a violence of the type of war or even fanaticism inspired terrorism, but it does result in violence, as in the Naxalite violence in India.

Equality, justice, toleration and *ahimsa* are more or less equivalent. This requires that the powerful and the privileged must not make others means of realization of their ends. This also means toleration of others' views and ways; as also *ahimsa*. The latter means not only not hurting others but also an attitude of perfect goodwill towards others, which forbids violent interference with the ways of others, though it may not include doing good to others. It is so because the urge for doing good often leads to aggression and even destruction of others' lives and culture.

Japan developed a beautiful philosophy of *Kyosei* which

unfortunately did not remain popular later. The philosophy of *Kyosei* is based on the Buddhist doctrine of "*pratityasamutpada*" that is interdependence of all beings and nature in life. And its protagonist Shiio Benkyo, contended that there would be peace and well-being all around, if human beings realize in practice that they depend on each other and on nature. It is the sense of separate, independent identities, seen in necessary conflict with each other that results in all conflicts and disruption of all chances of peace. The only way to peace is through the realization of the basic similarity, affinity of all human beings and their necessary interdependence.

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12. "He, O, Arjuna, who sees with equality everybody in the image of his own self (*atmopamyena sarvatra*) whether in pleasure or in pain, is considered a perfect yogi." *Bhagvadgita* VI. 32, Tr. S. Radhakrishnan (Bombay: Blacki & Sons, 1977)
13. The *Bijak of Kabir*, Trs., Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), pp. 77; 81, 83, etc.
14. "The Maker made them all … Who is a Brahmin; who is a Shudra? Don't get lost in false pride. False is the Hindu; false is the Turk." *ibid*. p. 81, also pp. 67., 88. The verses referred to above are found in the original Hindi version of Kabir's poems-*Kabir Granthavali*, ed. by Shyam Sundardas. I am not giving its details here.

15. "The Hindu says Ram is the beloved; The Turk says Rahim. Then they kill each other…. They are all deluded." *ibid*., pp. 42-43. Also see ibid. pp. 46, 64 etc. for his strong condemnation of killing animals for either sacrifice, or eating.
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Craft Globally, Blame Locally: How Global Neo-Liberal Development Cartographies Obfuscate Social Injustices Against the Poor in Sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

For over two decades now, Sub-Saharan Africa has been superimposed in a coercive and contradictory neo-liberal development economism agenda. According to this paradigm, markets and not states are the fundamental determinants of distributive justice and human flourishing through the promotion of economic growth that is believed to trickle down to the poor in due time. Despite the global intellectual criticism of this neo-liberal development economics orthodox of measuring development and well-being in terms of market induced economic growth, autocratic states in Sub-Saharan Africa that have accumulated uni-dimensional growth continue to be applauded as role models on poverty reduction, well-being and social justice by donors and global development institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. This is basically because they have wholly embraced the implementation of the anti-poor neo-liberal structural adjustment tool kit. This paper uses a critical hermeneutics[1] methodology to expose how the distortions embedded in neo-liberal GDP growth cartographies disguise the social injustices against the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa with particular reference to Uganda.

Key Words: Cartographies, Neo-liberal Development, Social Injustices, Sub-Saharan Africa, Corruption

1.0 Introduction

SINCE 1990, THERE has been a seeming increasing commitment to human rights and social justice on the African continent and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa as evidenced by the increasing commitment to electoral and constitutional democracy, ratification of international human rights treaties and domestication of these international human rights standards (political globalization). In Uganda, for example, even peasant cultivators were given the constitutional mandate to usher their leaders in and out of leadership.[2] In addition, women in Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya and Nigeria among other states were guaranteed the prerogative to equally compete with men in a formally patriarchal public sphere. This seemed to be a wind of change and new dawn on the African continent; however, it was during the same time that an ambitious and predatory neo-liberal economic agenda was imposed on African leaders with structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that would propel Sub-Saharan African from a 'bottomless pit' of indebtedness and economic stagnancy (economic globalization) to prosperity.

These SAPS were enshrined in privatization, cost-sharing, retrenchment and liberalization. According to this neo-liberal New Public Management (NPM) agenda spearheaded by the IMF and World Bank, the state had to virtually withdraw from the management of the economy so that markets could take over the promotion of economic growth and the distribution of well-being. The promotion of neo-liberal growth is believed to be a positive process that is oblivious of ethics, human rights and social justice.[3] This put many Sub-Saharan African countries in a contradictory positioning in the sense that, states which had leaders that had been voted into power by the citizens to promote and protect their rights and interests, were forced by neo-liberal precursors to turn against the same people by retrenching them from work without adequate compensation as well as evicting them from their agricultural lands in order to pave way for corporate agriculture.

In Uganda, for example, the fabulous bill of human rights in the Constitution and institutions that are supposed to protect the poor from social injustice are at total variance with the blatant violations of human rights by the state and the police brutality against anybody who dares to stand up against social injustices. In post-genocide Rwanda, despite the flamboyant performance of the economy and vital institutions such as the health sector, the government has persistently violated the right to freedom of association and expression and a number of journalists and political opponents have

lost their lives for standing up against the violation of human rights. This exposes the inadequacy of the GDP growth measurements in explaining sustainable development and human flourishing.

The persistent use of economic growth as a sole standard of development is an injustice. Economic growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of development and thus ought to be promoted in a frame work of equality, equity, environmental sustainability and respect for human rights, irrespective of gender, sex, colour, opinion and social status. According to the National Development Plan, ''the Ugandan Economy experienced varying growth rates when the Poverty Action Plan was being implemented, with an average GDP growth rate of 7.2 per cent between 1997/98 and 2000/01 to 6.8 per cent between 2000/01 and 2003/04, increasing to 8 per cent over the period 2004/05 to 2007/08 (NDP I, 2010: i).'' However, the plan is silent on how increased growth has enhanced the well-being, capabilities and livelihoods of the poor men and women in Uganda.

We ought to be aware of the fact that a country can easily have increased growth amidst structures of gender oppression, heinous human rights violations, environmental degradation and social exclusion. This implies that the benefits from such growth are only enjoyed and controlled by a tiny percentage of the population leaving the multitudes to languish in a sea of poverty. This paper contends that in measuring development and well-being, human rights and social justice must take precedence over economic efficiency and GDP growth for that matter.

2.0 The Demise of the Socialist Movement and the Superimposition of Sub-Saharan Africa in the Neo-liberal Empire

African nationalism espoused in the clamour for freedom and self governance bore fruit in the late 1960s when most of the states in Sub-Saharan Africa gained independence from their colonial masters. Colonialism was equated with capitalism and exploitation and therefore the 1970s saw a ''restoration'' of African identity and consciousness with a move to the left (socialism) in most of the states.[4] The African leadership and intelligentsia chose socialism as an ethic of development and ideology of distribution because of its close affinity to African communalism. They argued that capitalism was individualistic and hence, repugnant to the African social reality in which the common good takes precedence over the good of the individual. This social movement was led by Milton Obote in Uganda, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, Samora Machel in Mozambique, Nkrumah in Ghana and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania among others.[5]

However, the economic depression and political crises that characterised most of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s saw the total crumbling down of this anti-capitalist social movement as well as state economic sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa. This period saw the superimposition of Sub-Saharan African states in the neo-liberal 'empire' of structural adjustment, privatisation and New Public Management (NPM). As a result, "the African intelligentsia has argued that colonialism was thrown out through the door only to come back through the window."[6]

3.0 Growth-centrism and Magnanimous Economic Performance in the eyes of Neo-liberal Precursors and Proponents

Since the mid-1990s, Sub-Saharan Africa, for the first time in three decades, started growing at about the same rate as the rest of the world.[7] For example, over the decade (2000-2009), economic growth was very strong in East Africa, with regional real GDP growth averaging 6.6 per cent annually.[8] According to the World Bank, ''Uganda established a strong record of prudent macroeconomic management and structural reform between the 1990s and 2000s. The country was the first among Sub-Saharan African countries to embark on liberalization and pro-market policies in the late 1980s. During that time, a stable macroeconomic environment and sustained private sector-oriented reforms led to Uganda's graduation into a mature reformer in 2006. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 7 per cent per year in the 1990s and the 2000s."[9]

Uganda is regarded as the African country that has adopted the neo-liberal reform package most extensively.[10] It is considered the star performer of liberal economic reforms and the poster example that other African (and other developing) countries on the verge of starting reforms should copy in almost every aspect.[11] The country's ''apparent success [in the 1990s], allowed donors and the ruling political elite to claim Uganda as the jewel in their crown, an emblematic case for neo-liberal reform."[12] Neo-liberalism was imposed on the country, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, by external actors in the process and aftermath of structural adjustment policies after the1980s. It has since been pervasive, chiefly due to the powerful ideological, normative and material impact of the foreign agents of the 'development industry,' especially the international financial institutions (IFIs) and the various bilateral donors, which promoted neo-liberalism in the countr;y[13] but also due to the (evolving) interests, orientations and actions of a range of domestic actors.

4.0 Pro-Poor Deceptive Nuances in Neo-liberal Cartographies

Although the World Bank was for a long time not concerned about human rights in its articles of agreement, in 2000 it embarked on its famous project titled; "Voices of the Poor." The purpose of this project was to solicit the views of the poor on poverty which were to influence both domestic and global poverty policies. Sub-Saharan African economies such as Uganda and Rwanda were cautioned to include the views of the poor in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). This culminated in Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), which solicited the views of the poor, rich and civil society actors, among other stakeholders on poverty.

A close scrutiny of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) reveals that they are in tandem with neo-liberalism and technocratic assessments and hence, are largely devoid of the views of the poor. Now, if neo-liberalism essentially posits that markets are positive scientific processes that are self equilibrating and hence, should not be interfered with by even the state, how can the views of the poor have any consequence under such a neo-liberal mantra? When examining these Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) closely, one will notice the prominence of neo-liberal nuances such as privatization as the fulcrum of the economy and the surrender of agricultural livelihoods to corporate tyranny.

4.1 GDP Growth Centrism and the Uganda National Development Plan (NDP)

The revision of PEAP has ushered in the National Development Plan, a neo-liberal policy planning framework oriented towards economic growth and virtually devoid of human development and the perspectives of the poor. According to the National Development Plan:

> The overarching policy of the NDP will intertwine economic growth and poverty eradication. Policies and strategies will be focused towards achieving accelerated and sustainable growth in the priority areas, creation of gainful employment and socio-economic transformation for prosperity. Increasing incomes beyond the subsistence level and stimulating growth requires sustained orientation of Government expenditure and interventions towards the effective resolution of the most binding constraints …. Attention to these areas will have impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, productivity, household incomes and overall economic development.[14]

Despite being devoid of pro-poor perspectives, the first National Development Plan aims at transforming Uganda from a predominantly

peasant low income to a middle income country within 30 years. The plan envisaged that the country will graduate to the middle income segment by 2017.[15] Although the NDP claims to have been greatly informed by the experiences from PEAP which comprised a number of human development imperatives, it categorically aims at eradicating poverty through promoting economic growth.[16] This economic growth yardstick was not derived from the views of the poor but is rather a view of neo-liberal technocrats in the ministry of finance.

According to Amnesty International 2009 Human Rights Report:

> For the past two decades, the state has been retreating or reneging on its human rights obligations in favour of the market in the belief that economic growth would lift all boats. With the tide receding and boats springing leaks, governments are radically changing their positions and talking about a new global financial architecture and international governance system in which the state plays a stronger role. That opens up an opportunity to also halt the retreat of the state from the social sphere and re-design a more human rights friendly model of the state than the one that has characterized international policy-making for the past 20 years. It creates the possibility to radically rethink the role of international financial institutions in terms of respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights, including economic and social rights. Governments should invest in human rights as purposefully as they are investing in economic growth.[17]

Amnesty further opines that:

> 'Many experts point to the millions lifted out of poverty by economic growth, but the truth is that many more have been left behind, the gains have been far too fragile – as the recent economic crisis shows – and the human rights costs too high. Human rights were too often relegated to the backseat as the juggernaut of unregulated globalization swept the world into a frenzy of growth in recent years. The consequences are clear: growing inequality, deprivation, marginalization and insecurity; voices of people protesting suppressed with audacity and impunity; and those responsible for the abuses – governments, big business and international financial institutions – largely unrepentant and unaccountable' '… It is also clear that not only have governments abdicated economic and financial regulation to market forces, they have failed abysmally to protect human rights, lives and livelihoods. Billions of people are suffering from insecurity, injustice and indignity. This is a human rights crisis.'[18]

5.0 Current Narrative of Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction and Development in Uganda by Political Actors

Under the guidance of the IMF and World Bank, Uganda has painstakingly pursued an ambitious neo-liberal economic transition under President Yoweri Museveni since the early 1990s. Uganda has been hailed as an economic shining example, success story and the "development darling" of Africa by many international donors.[19] Despite successes in certain sectors and the adoption of an official Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) sponsored by the World Bank (WB), the poorest of the poor in Uganda have not necessarily experienced 'poverty eradication.' Sustained growth in the country has averaged 7.8 per cent since 2000, and official World Bank statistics say that as a result of this economic growth, poverty declined from 56 per cent in 1992 to 31 per cent in 2006[20] and 18 per cent in 2014. Sergeant reiterates that:

> Positive statistics are so often used by the international financial institutions (IFIs) to inflate their current projects and to play up the successes of neo-liberal reforms to serve their own gain. The focus on economic growth and its 'success' in Uganda has resulted in ignoring massive human rights violations being committed by the Ugandan government on its own people and the impact that conditional aid has actually had on the poorest of the poor. Loan debts will be paid by the poor and not the human rights abusing government who borrowed them through structural adjustment programmes that guarantee the international community will continue to have a hand in Uganda for decades to come.[21]

According to president Museveni, the Ugandan economy continues to be vibrant amidst economic challenges and reforms on the local, regional and International scene.[22] GDP rate of growth is 5.1 per cent; Inflation rate is 3.6 per cent; Foreign exchange reserves are US$ 3.3 billion; Export earnings are US$ 4.9 billion; remittances from Ugandans abroad are US$ 767.26 million; The total size of GDP of Uganda is 54.7 trillion shillings; The total size of GDP is US$ 21.2 billion.[23]

What has brought about economic recovery in Uganda in the last 26 years in Museveni's opinion are : "security of person and property brought about by the NRM, but more especially by the discipline of NRA/UPDF; the Private Sector, whose investments account for about 77 per cent of all total investments in the economy, including investments of our citizens of Indian origin (who contribute 25-30 per cent of all the total investments); the macro-economic stabilization

and liberalization of the economy, which enabled us to control inflation for a very long time and to free the private sector from bureaucratic interference; the ever-expanding consumer demand in Uganda and in the region; and some little support from Development Partners."[24] Museveni further opines that Africa growth is miraculous despite the lack of infrastructure, no electricity, and no roads. Africa has got higher rates of growth of 5.8 per cent as against USA's 1.9 per cent, average global of 3 per cent and the Euro Zone — 0.4 per cent.[25]

5.1 Skeptical Perceptions of Uganda's Miraculous GDP Growth by Donors

With a value of 0.514 in the 2009 Human Development Index, Uganda has moved from the low to the medium human development level and is now at position 157 out of 182. Uganda was able to reduce poverty considerably during the past two decades. Household data show that between 1993 and 2006 the percentage of people living below the poverty line fell from 56 to 31. Under the NDP, Uganda strives to further reduce this share to 24.5 by 2015. However, inequality as measured by the Gini-coefficient rose since 1993. There are strong disparities in income regionally and between rural and urban areas. Poverty estimates range from 5 per cent in urban areas of the central region to 64 per cent in the rural North.[26]

As witnessed by the reduction of poverty, Uganda's economy grew steadily in the past decade with annual GDP growth rates between 6 and 10 per cent, while in 2009 the rate dropped to 5 per cent as a result of the global economic crisis. The annual growth rate up to 2015 is projected at 7 per cent. But this progress had a mixed impact with respect to the Millennium Development Goals. Uganda is on track on the indicators of population below the poverty line, primary education enrolment, girl-to-boy ratio in primary education, prevalence of HIV-AIDS and access to improved water sources (e.g. rural water supply coverage increased from 40 per cent in the mid-1990s to 65 per cent in 2009). On all other indicators, however, the country is off track and most seriously so on primary education completion and child and maternal mortality. This leaves Uganda with serious challenges to poverty reduction which, as is economic growth, is further hampered by the high population growth of 3.3 per cent.[27]

Development in the region of Northern Uganda was affected by two decades of violent conflict. Towards the end of conflict, the poverty rate in the region was estimated at 61 per cent, which is double the national average. Socio-economic activities had virtually come to a standstill for most of the population in the central North and humanitarian assistance had become regular for several years.

Confined within conflict, the population of the North in addition suffered from sociopolitical marginalistion in the national context. Violence, particularly against women and children, and land disputes are major problems. Following the cessation of hostilities in 2006, security was restored, the formerly displaced population returned to their places of origin and socio-economic activities slowly resumed. Nevertheless, the challenges for reconstruction and development remain enormous.[28]

In response to these challenges, the Austria government directed its funding efforts to sustainably reduce poverty, vulnerability and inequality. In line with the Austrian Development Cooperation policy on poverty reduction, this support took into account the multifaceted nature of poverty and target aspects of two dimensions of poverty by focusing on (1) the provision of sustainable social and environmental services and (2) participation and empowerment. It specifically contributed (1) to the MDG targets 10 and 11 related to water and sanitation and (2) to the strengthening of human rights.

The German Government on the other hand supports Uganda's endeavour to move towards becoming a middle income country but puts special focus on promoting human rights, reforms in public financial management, contributing to peace-consolidation and improving livelihoods, particularly in Karamoja and other parts of Northern Uganda.[29] In addition, Sweden's new development cooperation strategy for 2014-2018 aims at creating better conditions in Uganda for sustainable economic growth and development. The aid package seeks to strengthen respect for human rights, improve sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as promote sustainable growth and employment.

According to USAID, although Prosperity can be measured by poverty rates and GDP growth, and the distribution of prosperity can be measured by ratios and Gini-coefficients, a modern country implies democratic principles and orderly succession of power, transparency and predictability for the private sector and civil society, and efficient, equitable services for the population. Uganda's steady path of poverty reduction over the past 20 years could easily be broken in any number of ways, such as through major internal conflict, service delivery that cannot keep up with the needs of the growing population and economy, accelerated dissatisfaction over poor governance, or spiraling corruption caused by the emerging oil industry.

6.0 Systemic Corruption and Cronyism in Uganda Amidst Unprecedented GDP Growth: An Apparent Contradiction

For a very long time, many Ugandans have innocently argued that as

far as corruption in Uganda is concerned, President Yoweri Museveni is being frustrated by his corrupt ministers. The implication of this perception is that the president is not corrupt and greedy like his political cadres. Today, Ugandans are still nursing the shock after learning of the president's acquisition of two executive Mercedes Benz vehicles at a cost of about 6 billion Ugandan shillings. President Museveni has been very instrumental in the watering down of the Inspectorate of Government and Leadership Code of Conduct 2002 which is a brainchild of his NRM regime, for example:

> In 2004, President Museveni told off the former IGG, Jotham Tumwesigye, to stop interfering with the work of other government officials, when the former ordered the arrest of Lucien Tibaruha, then Ag. Solicitor General, because the latter had sanctioned the payment of thirteen billion Uganda shillings to one James Musinguzi Garuga in compensation for his farm, which had been allocated to settlers by the government. On the other hand, he (the President) applauds the work of the current IGG prompting one to wonder whether it is a mere façade of a well orchestrated effort by the State to frustrate the work of the Inspectorate of Government and to limit its jurisdiction.[30]

Kakooza Mutale, a Senior Presidential Advisor, failed to declare his wealth as required by the Leadership Code Act, prompting the Inspector General of Government in May 2003 to recommend that the President should relieve Mr. Mutale of his duties. Mutale went to court to challenge the decision of the Inspector General of Government (IGG) and his main ground was that there was no prescribed legal form on which to declare his wealth, which arguably was a mere technicality since all other leaders had managed to declare their wealth in various forms. Unfortunately:

The President swore an affidavit in support of his application, thereby sending out the message that the President and his men were not interested in the fight against political corruption and as such were making it harder for the Inspector of Government to carry out his functions. This was confirmed by the President's willingness to re-instate Kakooza Mutale despite the fact that the said petitioner had contravened the law (as it was then). If it were not so, then the President did not have to be the deponent nor did he have to categorically state that he would reinstate the applicant despite the fact that the applicant had breached the law. This was a clear departure from the President's earlier commitment to strict adherence to the rule of law and zero tolerance for corruption.[31]

Captain Mike Mukula, the former junior Minister of Health

appealed against his January 18, 2013 conviction to four years in jail for embezzling Shs 210m from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI). President Museveni gave him 100 million Uganda shillings as legal fees to help secure his freedom. The Presidential Press Secretary, Mr.Tamale Mirundi confirmed this development and described this conduct as Museveni's contribution to his friend.[32] Miria Matembe, an anti-corruption activist and former Minister of Ethics and Integrity in Museveni's government reiterated that Museveni cannot lead the fight against corruption because many of the suspects are his relatives and cronies.[33]

Despite his obliviousness to the neo-liberal dimension of corruption in Uganda, Andrew Mwenda has succinctly argued that corruption in Uganda should been seen "…as a social institution through which political power is organised, distributed, exercised and reproduced."[34] In other words, there is no way Museveni and his National Resistance Movement regime can exist without corruption. According to Roger Tangri:

> Under President Museveni, the management of state institutions has been increasingly subject to executive influence. Museveni has been personally responsible for appointing government ministers, higher civil servants, and army officers. 'The purpose of these personalized appointments is to make every office holder feel personally grateful and loyal to the person of the President instead of the institution of the State in Uganda.' Moreover, what has bound these senior state officials to the President has been the possibility of using their positions for the sake of personal gain. Museveni has been able to consolidate his support among top state personnel by allowing them to appropriate public resources for their own personal benefit. State House has also intervened frequently in governmental decision-making and the allocation of public resources. In exercising his powers, the President has been able to act non-transparently and without much political accountability in the area of public governance. By flouting public rules, regulations, and procedures, and manipulating situations of weak transparency and accountability, Uganda's current rulers have been more concerned with serving their own interests than with establishing honest and effective state institutions.[35]

Despite the widespread reports of rampant corruption in Uganda, as evidenced in the embezzlement of 50 billion Uganda shillings meant for the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP),[36] and consequently the suspension of Aid to Uganda by Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom,[37] the IMF argued that: ''Uganda's economy was set to expand by 5 per cent in the 2012/13 fiscal year from 3.4 per cent in the previous period, driven by falling

lending rates and higher government spending."[38] As usual the IMF did not explain how the increased growth was translating into the welfare of the citizens. In addition, the World Bank also vaguely retorted that:

> ..... it is reviewing its development assistance to Uganda, while also strengthening its own measures to ensure that its funds are used for their intended purposes. The World Bank Group is concerned about recent allegations of misuse of public funds in Uganda and is calling for remedial action. The World Bank, however, said it will continue to work with the government of Uganda and other development partners to help the country deliver on its national policy of "zero" tolerance for corruption.[39]

Injustice was further manifested in the resolve of the executive to use tax payer's money from the consolidated fund in order to refund the billions of shillings stolen in the Office of the Prime Minister.[40]

6.1 When Economic Growth Thrives in Uganda Amidst Heinous Human Rights Violations

Although Uganda boasts of persistent economic growth over the years, the country is slowly but steadily moving away from the rule of law to rule by law. Despite the fact that the 1995 Ugandan constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of assembly, association, freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment among others, the government has often used the police force to curtail all these rights. Members from the opposition are always in and out of prison for standing out against the abuse of constitutional human rights.

All institutions of the state are enmeshed in Presidential appointment powers. For example, the head of the Uganda Electoral Commission and all the commissioners in that institution are appointed by the President. One can imagine such an injustice where members of opposition political parties participate in an election where the incumbent president controls the referee and all liners. Despite all this farce about elections in Uganda, western countries such as the USA and western election monitoring institutions have always gone ahead to applaud free and fair elections in Uganda.

Chomsky aptly reiterates that "neo-liberalism works best when there is formal electoral democracy, but when the population is diverted from the information, access, and public forums necessary for meaningful participation in decision-making."[41] He further opines "that the US has repeatedly overthrown democratic regimes because: The more a country is democratic, the more it is likely to be responsive

to the public, and hence committed to the dangerous doctrine that "the government has a direct responsibility for the welfare of the people," and therefore is not devoted to the transcendent needs of Big Brother (US). We have to do something about it. Democracy is okay but only as long as US can control it and be sure that it comes out the way US wants."[42]

It must be noted that Uganda has simply made a transition from a pseudo broad base movement (a single party in practice) system to pseudo multiparty political system. In addition, to the state continues to use extra constitutional organs such as the Kiboko squad to harass individuals exercising their right to freedom of assembly. The state had persistently used illegal safe houses to torture citizens and although victims of torture have been awarded compensation by the Uganda Human Rights Commission tribunal, the state has not compensated a majority of the victims of torture.[43] During the walk to work protests in 2011, the world was shocked by the brutal arrest of Kizza Besigye and the incredible human rights abuses that were committed by the police and army on the citizens. Because of this brutal repression, many people wondered whether Uganda has simply made a transition from Amin to *Aminism*.

In addition, during the celebration of 50 years Uganda's independence, a number of members of the opposition were detained in the homes under a colonial law called *preventive arrest*. Many Ugandans looked at this as an amazing paradox. In 2012, Ssemuju Nganda, a member of Parliament was arrested like a *chicken thief* for consulting members of his constituency.[44] In August 2013, the Parliament of Uganda that is popularly known as a rubber stamp of the President, passed a Public Order and Management Act (POMA) that greatly curtails the right to freedom of association and assembly. According to this law, Ugandans gathering in groups of more than three people need police permission or else will be arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. Sad still, the law brings back section 32(2) of the Police Act[45] that was successfully challenged in courts of law. Such incidents show that the current government presided over by Museveni has nothing to do with human rights and social justice. Its major aim is entrenching itself in power using the USA and her client states as protectors. Sarah Tangen, a former resident representative of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, has astutely described Uganda as a pseudo democracy with authoritarian traits.[46]

6.2 Development Induced Displacement in the Name of GDP Growth

Despite the availability of the 1998 Land act which provides security of tenure to peasant squatters, Uganda has witnessed massive

evictions of peasants from their land over the years in the name of development and GDP growth. For example:

> On August 18, 2001, the Government of Uganda acting through the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) deployed its army which brutally displaced 392 peasant families (approximately 2041 persons). Their houses were demolished, properties destroyed, and staple crops such as cassava and potatoes were confiscated. Several of them were beaten up during the eviction. They were living on a small portion of land which was too leased to the Kaweri Coffee Plantation Ltd, for the purpose of establishing a coffee plantation.[47]

After the eviction, some peasants were employed on the coffee plantation as casual labourers. These peasants face labour exploitation on the plantation while the payment they receive is so low that they are unable to feed themselves and their families adequately. They are forced to accept labour exploitation because their land, which was their primary means to feed themselves, was brutally appropriated. Since the forcible eviction in August 2001, the displaced peasants have been fighting with all the means at their disposal to gain their right to food. After their attempts to reach a settlement by political means had failed, they filed a court case, directly against the Attorney General of Uganda in his capacity as representative of the Ugandan government on the one hand, and against Kaweri on the other. However, the hearings were postponed several times without any prior notice, making the long and expensive journey to the court futile.

These Peasants in Mubende were awarded 7 billion Ugandan Shillings in compensation in a court judgment delivered by Justice Anup Singh Choudry. However the file has since disappeared. Justice Anup Singh Choudry opines that:

> Last year in March, I gave a judgment in the case in favour of the peasants of Kaweri farmers and ordered that the sh20m that they paid into court for security of costs be paid out forthwith. I was informed that the file was required by Nakawa court before the monies could be released. However, I was most reluctant to part with the file as I knew fully well that once this sensitive file left my chambers, it would disappear, because we have mafia in the Judiciary. In the end I released the file to Nakawa court with a provision that it must be returned to my chambers…... "But, now the farmers cannot be paid because the file is missing. I note that the lawyers for the farmers are being tossed from one place to another or from one court to another each day for the last one year." I fear we have mafias in the court, otherwise there is no rhyme, for such a massive file to be misplaced or to disappear.[48]

6.3 Environmental Degradation in the Name of GDP Growth

President Museveni has pursued a policy of modernisation of the economy for GDP growth even at the expense environmental sustainability. He has accused the opposition of being development saboteurs and enemies of modernisation because they delayed the construction of Bujagali power project under 'flimsy' environmental concerns. He has come up with a legal proposal of making the offence of economic sabotage a non-bailable offence contrary to the bill of rights in the 1995 Uganda Constitution. President Museveni's support of GDP oriented capitalism is eminent in his famous statement that:

> Madhvani is an Indian by colour, but he is more African than 2 million Africans combined because he is doing more value for the Africans. By producing sugar, soap and a number of other products he is paying the government of Uganda 45 billion Shillings in taxes. What is the wage bill of Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF)? UShs 120 billion the whole year. Madhvani alone can pay you for five months![49]

On April 12th 2007, thousands of people in Kampala took to the streets to protest against the plan of the government to give away 7100 acres of Mabira forest to Mehta, an Asian sugar investor. The investor intends to cut down the forest in order to facilitate sugar canes growing for his sugar corporation. The demonstration turned into a bloody riot that claimed the lives of one Indian and two Ugandans.[50]

This event is a clear demonstration of the conflict between GDP growth oriented modernisation and environmental sustainability. President Museveni has demonstrated his commitment to the modernisation paradigm in the plan for the modernisation of agriculture when he vowed that he will not be intimidated by the riots about Mabira forest give way. He has categorically stated that, "I shall not be deterred by people who do not see where the future of Africa lies. They do not understand that the future of all countries lies in processing."[51] The pressure exerted on the state by the people of Uganda to give up the leasing of Mabira forest is reflective of the tensions between the choices of the people and the private sector motivated modernisation demands of the state. This is indicative of the fact that modernisation should be based on dialogue instead of coercion.

In addition, according to a report by Friends of the Earth International, the World Bank has provided millions of dollars in funding and technical support to palm oil expansion in forested islands off the coast of Lake Victoria in Kalangala, Uganda. Nearly 10,000

hectares have already been planted covering almost a quarter of the land area of the islands. Palm oil plantations have come at the expense of local food crops and rainforests. Local people have been prevented from accessing water sources and grazing land. Despite promises of employment, locals have lost their means of livelihood and are struggling to make ends meet.

David Kureeba from the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) / Friends of the Earth Uganda opines that:

> People's rights to land are being demolished despite protection for them under the Ugandan Constitution. Small scale farming and forestry that protected unique wildlife, heritage and food of Uganda is being converted to palm oil wastelands that only profit agribusinesses. The Ugandan Government must prioritise small scale ecological farming and protect people's land rights.[52]

John Muyiisha, a farmer from Kalangala, tells of how he woke up one morning to find bulldozers destroying his crops. He had owned the land for 34 years. Other community members were contracted to plant palm oil and then forced to sell their land because of debts, low income from palm oil and no food crops.

Kirtana Chandrasekaran, Friends of the Earth International Food Sovereignty Coordinator opines that:

> These Ugandan testimonies show the fallacy of trying to make land grabbing work for communities or the environment. Decades of policies to privatise land and promote industrial farming from the World Bank have set the stage for a massive global land grab. Governments around the world need to stop land grabbing, not just try to mitigate its worst impacts. Governments must abide by their Human Rights obligations on land and drastically reducing demand for commodities such as palm oil from the West.[53]

The project is a joint venture between global agrofuels giant Wilmar International and BIDICO, one of the largest oilseeds companies in Eastern Africa with funding from International Financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Ugandan Government.[54]

6.4 Conclusion

This paper has been premised on the contention that the global development policy paradigms that are reinforced on Sub-Saharan Africa disguise the nature of social injustices against the poor. These positivistic neo-liberal development policies use economic growth as a yardstick for measuring human well-being and flourishing and

virtually ignore issues of social justice and human rights promotion and protection. In this paper, I have expounded how heinous social injustices against the poor prevail in countries like Uganda despite commendable performance in the promotion of economic growth. This paper has also contended that meaningful development must be centered on social justice and human rights.

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An Essay on Gandhian Political Theory

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ABSTRACT

Gandhian political theory has been broadly debated from two important perspectives. One argument places Gandhian political theory as a relative or a reconciled pattern of both Western and Eastern traditions. The other argument suggests that Gandhi is an original thinker, in the sense that he is a unique innovator of political concepts, inherently based on Indian traditions. In this way, it can be argued that Gandhi developed a distinctive and an alternative version of political theory compared to Western notion of political theory. I shall argue in the same line. My concern is to emphasize an alternative version of political theory that Gandhi had dealt with; it is to stress the essential character of Gandhian thread running through the traditional thought developed in India.

Key Words: Gandhi, political theory, Indian political theory, essentialism, Gandhian political theory

GANDHIAN POLITICAL THEORY has been broadly debated from two important perspectives. One argument places Gandhian political theory as a relative or a reconciled pattern of both western and eastern traditions. The other argument suggests that Gandhi is an original thinker, in the sense that he is a unique innovator of political concepts, inherently based on Indian traditions. In this way, it can be argued that Gandhi developed a distinctive as well as an alternative version of political theory compared to western notion of political theory. However, he himself did not believe in any such absolute predictions or prescriptive norms of truth. He believed in no permanent truth

(except God) and discarded his own ideas by saying that they are as old as the Himalayas. He also nullified the fact that there is nothing specific about Gandhism. I shall argue in the same line. My concern is to emphasize an alternative vision of political theory that Gandhi had dealt with; it is to stress the essential character of Gandhian thread running through the traditional thought developed in India.

This paper is divided into three parts, involving three important aspects of political theory. The first part attempts an analysis of the idea of political theory. This part involves a very brief account of the nature and function of political theory. The second part tries to give at the outset what constitutes the essential elements of Gandhian political theory. It deals with the essential aspects and functions of political theory which, in a way, undertakes an analysis of human nature, politics, state, power and democracy. The third part focuses on conceptual analysis of Gandhian political theory: freedom, equality, justice, rights and duties. And finally, the conclusion focuses on the contemporary relevance of Gandhian political theory.

What is Political Theory?

Political theory analyses political life, nature of prevailing political behaviour and patterns of political system that provides a set of norms for good life. It also examines the interdependence and inter-linkage between various parts of political life which, in a sense, gives a wider meaning to society. Bernard Crick defined political theory as an "attempt to explain the attitudes and actions arising from ordinary political life and to generalize about them in a particular context; thus political theory is basically concerned with the relationships between concepts and circumstances."[1] For Goodwin political theory:

> is a technique of analysis which can be used to overturn, as well as to uphold. Departing from fact and detail, it describes and explains politics in abstract and general terms, justify and criticize the disposition of power in the society, which allow scope for the critical imagination. Political theory may be defined as the discipline which aims to explain, justify or criticize the disposition of power in the society. It delineates the balance of power between states, groups and individuals.[2]

For Mackinnon, Political theory is the study of how we should live together in society.[3] Political theory is a response to the questions arising out of the complexities of social life; the answers it seeks may not be agreed to by everybody. It may not have any particular answer that defines the meaning holistically. Weinstein explains:

> Political theory is an activity that involves posing questions developing

> responses to those questions and creating imaginative perspective on the public life of human beings. Like all fields of intellectual endeavour, the subject of political theory can best be understood by associating the questions associated with its study. There is no correct definition of the scope of political theory. The scope of an intellectual activity is created by efforts to answer the questions that are posed within it.[4]

The great political theorists created their works in response to problems that they discovered in the realms of either practical affairs or speculative thought.[5] The best way to become a political theorist or at least to appreciate the work of political theorists is to become seriously concerned about a problem in public life. Efforts to resolve that problem will lead to search for appropriate concepts through which public life can be described. Once the relationship between these concepts and their validity are recognized, one is engaged in the activity of political theory.[6]

Political theory undertakes three important dimensions of enquiry: normative, explanatory and contemplative. Normative political theory is also called prescriptive, justificatory and advocatory. Macpherson argues that a normative political theory is normative when it prescribes certain norms and justifies those norms for establishing a good society. He argues that a normative political theory can be justified only on a moral basis. For him, no political theory can be treated as sound unless it is guided both by explanatory as well as normative underpinnings. Further, he emphasizes that "every political theory is a product of its age and has a time-bound quality."[7] Sheldon Wolin defines political theory in general terms as a tradition of discourse concerned about the present being and well-being of collectivities. It is primarily a civil and secondarily an academic activity. In my understanding this means that political theory is a critical engagement with collective existence and with the political experiences of power stemming from such engagement.[8] According to Hannah Arendt, political theory is not reducible to its explanatory or normative functions, although clearly these functions are part of its defining features. Political theory, for her, continues to be what it was for classical thinkers – "a deeply contemplative enquiry into the general condition of human kind either over a very long period or at certain stage of their changing existence."[9]

What is Gandhian Political Theory?

Whether Gandhian political theory is essentialist or relativist is a moot question. The debate swings into both the directions. I argue that Gandhian political theory is essentialist in nature. In claiming Gandhian political theory essentialist in nature, I rely on the methodology of

the intellectual tradition of India.

Essentialism searches for the intrinsic nature of things as they are in and of themselves. The opposite of essentialism is relationalism. In analytic philosophy, essences are called natural kinds. Natural kinds are those to which terms and classification refer when they are true and constant in all possible worlds. These terms became what Kripke calls – "rigid designators."[10] Natural kinds are things-in-themselves, after they have reached their true state and unfolded their inherent potential. They cannot be imagined otherwise. The preferred logical mode on essentialism is necessity, worked in formal syllogisms, deductions, definitions, tautologies, and the like. Natural kinds always exist, or seem to exist, independent of relationships, context, time, or observer. The properties of natural kinds are those that make a thing what it essentially is; the rest is merely accidental, or contingent or historical. Essentialism makes either/or distinctions, rather than variable distinctions in degree. It posits polar opposites, instead of gradations and empirical continuity. Plenty of examples are available. Science is driven by either method or without it; action is either rational or interpretative; the nature of art is to express subjective experience; the nature of technology is impersonality; knowledge either corresponds to the world or is socially constructed; the mind is either a machine or a conscious; the nature of method in social science is ideographic hermeneutics; society is either Geminschaft or Gesellschaft, but not both at the same time.

In essentialism, the preferred mode of operation is static typologies and rigid classifications, whose grids separate things that are everywhere, and under all circumstances, really separate. Essentialism is often accompanied by a dualistic cosmology that draws deep distinctions between things natural and social, body and mind, behaviour and action, cause and intention.

Gandhian essentialism rests on the fact that he underlines the distinctive tradition of Indian life which has developed from a very long period of time. Modernity and its impact on society undermine the ancient virtues of good life both in the West and the East. Gandhi makes an essentialist judgement as to which yardsticks and principles should constitute the true and spirited life. He uses the political and moral concepts in a way to lead the virtues of good life free from the unending quest for materiality.

The distinctive features of Gandhian political theory, specifically the conceptual analysis of political and moral categories, presented as a separate entity in which one can recognize the specialty of Gandhi as a political thinker and a practitioner of intellectual history of Indian tradition. The distinctiveness of an idea of Indian political theory,

like the British or American or African political theories, is inherently rooted in the distinctiveness of the social and cultural traditions of India. Indian civilization being one of the oldest civilizations of the world, stored many thought provoking ideas in its history. In course of the progress of civilization different religious creeds were also developed. The discourse in religions developed central ideas as to how human beings would pursue a good life, how they should behave in society and polity. From *puranic* and *vendantic* traditions, monarchy was developed as mode of ruling in the society. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* gave a vivid description of India's past distinctive administrative mechanism. The establishment of the Mughal and British rule provided new dimensions to the cultural tradition of India. Colonial rule in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries inculcated western spirit and values to the traditions of India. The western ideas guided by the enlightenment influenced the pattern of British hegemony over non-western societies through colonial and imperial domination. And in this colonial and imperial context, started the nationalist movements – as liberatory movement – giving birth to many strands of indigenous thought processes as part of the rich historical and cultural tradition. During the nationalist movement in India, the social reformers took the lines of argument of British rationalists as well as reinvented ideas from the traditional Indian sources such as *vedanta* and *purana*. Thinkers like Dayananda, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra and Gandhi developed an Indian nationalist consciousness from the *vedantic* and the Hinduistic perspectives. They tried to counter British rule and western ideas from the standpoint of Indian philosophical perspective. In this context, it is argued that "the Indian political thought as a field of study is a part of liberative knowledge. The study of how Indian thinkers have reflected upon issues of power and freedom is very significant to understand the history of institutions and movements in India."[11] In this context, it is very relevant to bring out the contribution Gandhi made to the great political canon of India. His leadership and personal charisma during the freedom struggle had impressed many people both inside and outside India. The sources of these ideas which he presented in *Hind Swaraj* and further writings demonstrated a distinctive Indian way of life.[12]

Gandhian political theory's distinctiveness is emphasized by Bondurant:

> Gandhi did not proceed from any specific political ideology, and yet the significance, for political theory, of his action on the practical field of politics, is inestimable. The contribution has been not alone to the development of a social and political method. It is extended further into

> the realm of political thought and challenges the substantial presuppositions of the mainstream of political theory.[13]

Prof. Charles Sisson of Elphinstone College, Bombay, was highly impressed by Gandhi's moral and political ideas. He had seriously discussed several issues of political implications in the 1920s with Gandhi, and finally reached the conclusion that "Gandhi was more of an Indian scholar."[14] The sources of religious and cultural tradition in India enriched his thought process. His experiment with religion and politics (spiritual and secular) is very much distinctive in the historical tradition of Indian political thought. His ideas on decentralized democracy, autonomous self, critique of modernity and modern industrialization and empowered self were to be sustained by self-control and self-development and overcoming weaknesses grounded in violence, anger, intolerance and hate. His acceptance of state-society separation (*Ramarajya*), individual freedom, sarvodaya, satyagraha and means-end relationship is quite remarkable and constitute his integrated version of a coherent and synthetic formulation of political theory. Mehta saw in Gandhi a synthetic vision that integrally linked the individual, community and the political order. It brings within its agenda the non-human world and the cosmos.[15] In contrast to western political theory founded on the principles of modernity, rationalism, secularism, individualism and technocratism, Gandhi developed an alternative vision of good life based on Indian tradition.

The contemporary trends in political theory involve issues that truly concern the essentially pluralist nature of society across the world. The different societies have developed varieties of trends in political understanding of social, economic and cultural conditions. In the second half of the twentieth century, the works of Berlin and Rawls[16] have emphatically laid down that the idea of pluralism is the most potential theoretical device that can produce authentic and pragmatic answers to most of the complex questions of society. Gandhian political theory also needs to be seen in the context of pluralism. He is no doubt, as Parel argues, a pluralist political thinker, who attached importance to the meaning of a good life in Indian society. He also suggests that Gandhi retained two important ideas from the old Indian cannons – the need for plurality of sciences and the need for a plurality of life-goals or the *purusharthas*. Indian theologies in this sense belonged to a broad field of the human sciences. Parel elaborates:

> Gandhi viewed that the western notion of science that is alone sufficient for human well-being is *something* that emerged from a particular

> direction that modern western thought had taken. Such a notion does not apply elsewhere. The modern Indian political cannon stands squarely against the claim that modern science is the only knowledge sufficient for human well-being. This is monism in the disguise of science. Gandhi rejects monism in favour of a plurality of sciences. Two epistemologies would produce two types of knowledge – knowledge based on experience and knowledge based on positive reason.[17]

Gandhi's problem was not with modern science and its techniques or methods, but was more concerned with the ideology of science. This is an ideology that believes in the incompatibility between scientific truths and spiritual truths. He is disgusted with such a view of science adopted deeply by the West and its persuasiveness remains. This is spreading a culture or disbelief in the name of positive reason. Since western civilization is irreligious, it cannot make a bridge between the material and spiritual. The search for *artha* and *kama* lead to the demolition of other aspects of good life like *dharma* and *moksha*. This is very unpleasant and also a dangerous course of civilization. It can lead to self-destruction. Gandhi was very much interested in his own Indian tradition, which taught him to strike a balance between the material and the spiritual. In this way, Parel argued that Gandhi tried to bridge the gap between the secular and spiritual. This is Gandhi's unique and original contribution to political theory. He based his argument on the idea that the experience (*anubhava*) of seers like sages and saints can bring a new meaning to human life. Parel adds that the new cannon Gandhi introduced is a blend of modernity with spirituality, science with religion, and rational knowledge with spiritual experience. The following sections deal with the analysis of Gandhi's political concepts in terms of the alternative understanding that it sought to project.

Human Nature

All political theories must begin with some coherent view of the nature of man at least in so far as it affects his moral aims and conduct in society. Human nature, so to say, is not static, but always dynamic. Changes are unpredictable and empirical studies have failed to grasp them with any degree of precision. Raghavan Iyer writes:

> Political theory which does not start from a human nature tends to become either pretentious or trivial. The choice between an optimistic conception (from Plato to Kant) and a pessimistic view (from St Augustine to Hobbes) of human nature is logically independent of the choice between an open and a closed view of human nature or again the choice between the acceptance and the rejection of the perfectibility of man, or finally, the

> degree of power and autonomy that is granted to man in relation to Nature (or God) and his material and social environment….Political philosophy involves a search for 'a definition of man' and the major political thinkers differ in the accounts they give of the powers essential to men. This means both description and prescription; the facts are verifiable but cannot be conclusively settled, the values and choices commanded may be defended or disputed in terms of moral principle and common experience, but must in the end be left for each individual to test for himself… In secular philosophies, the elevation of man is usually achieved through a mechanistic conception of nature and the belief that human reason is capable of comprehending and manipulating the world.[18]

Gandhi distinguishes humans from the brutes. The brute by nature knows no self-restraint and man is man because he is capable of self-restraint. Elsewhere, he suggests that "the duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast. Man becomes great exactly to the degree to which he works for the welfare of his fellow men."[19]

Kant acknowledged the frailty, impurity and depravity of human nature. Gandhi, like Kant held that frailty was an inevitable result of the weakness of the will, which could in principle be remedied; impurity is the unfortunate consequence of the fact that even our purest motives are not wholly untainted by considerations other than the highest; while depravity points to corruption rather than the inherent evil of the human heart.

The moral culture of man must begin not with improvement of morals but with a transformation of the mind and the training of the mind. Gandhi said:

> ….man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth appropriation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked always deserves respect or pity as the case may be.[20]

Interpretation of History

The view of human nature propagated by Gandhi has a link with his interpretation of history as well as his view of cosmic evolution. Life is an inspiration and its mission is to strive after perfection and that is rationalisation. He believed in the power of the spirit of man to shape its environment to some extent and thus affect the course of history. Gandhi explicitly rejected the Marxist interpretation of history. He could not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment. He added:

> Marxist regards thought, as it were, a secretion of the brain and the mind, a reflex of the material environment. I cannot accept that …. If I have an awareness of that living principle within me, no one can fetter my mind. The body might be destroyed; the spirit will proclaim its freedom. This to me is not a theory; it is a fact of experience.[21]

When Gandhi said that he did not believe that it is *prakriti* (matter) which originates and governs the thought-process of *purusha* (spirit), he was clearly enunciating a faith and a belief that are not susceptible to proof any more than is the opposite view. Gandhi was convinced that what was good in Marxism was not original or exclusive to it, and what was exclusive to it was not necessarily good. Gandhi said:

> ..my quarrel with the Marxists is that even if the paradise of material satisfactions, which they envisage as their final goal, were realized on earth, it would not bring mankind either contentment or peace. But I was wondering whether we cannot take best out of Marxism and turn it to account for the realization of our social aims.[22]

Gandhi believed that what had made the teaching of Marx dynamic was that he regarded mankind as a whole and identified himself with the cause of the poor oppressed toilers of the world. But in that he is not alone. Others besides him have done the same. While conceding the vision and dynamism of Marx, Gandhi explicitly rejected his reductionism. He said:

> I do not consider economic factors to be the source of all the evils of the world. Nor is it correct to trace the origin of all wars to economic causes. What were the causes of the last war? (1914) …Was not Helen the cause of the Trojan War? But why go so far? Rajput wars which belong to modern history had never their origin in economic causes.[23]

Gandhi's criticism of Marxist interpretation of history was profound, but he put his finger on the basic weakness of Marxism: "these people have concentrated their study on the depth of degradation to which human nature can descend. What use have they for the study of the heights of which human nature can descend. What use have they for the study of the heights to which human nature could rise." The virtue of Gandhi's view of history lay for him in its being dynamic, hopeful and universal, but ultimately it is the 'Unseen Power' that governs the course of events even in the minds of men who made those events. He had a transcendentalist view of history. Human history is, for Gandhi, neither a unilinear trend of progress nor a static picture of eternal recurrence, but rather, a spiral-

like movement that is determined by the power of spirit over the matter within the limits of the course plotted out by *karma,* the contemporary law of ethical causation. There is a divine guarantee that goodwill ultimately triumph over evil, but he explicitly rejected the unilinear view of human progress, individual or collective.

Iyer explains:

> Gandhi's political concepts possess a variety of meanings ranging from religious purity to political expediency, but he was neither a pure absolutist nor a mere opportunist. It would be a failure to grasp the man or his ethical preoccupations to explain away his concepts entirely in terms of political expediency. He certainly evolved his concepts and elaborated them in the context of practical problems that he faces as a politician and social worker. It is far more appropriate to consider his concepts in terms of their metaphysical and moral presuppositions than to regard them as techniques justified solely by their results. On the basis of his presuppositions, Gandhi was convinced that *ahimsa* would certainly triumph, but he would have held to it even if its immediate application was likely to meet with failure. Many of his followers, especially in the United States, have stressed the effectiveness rather than the righteousness of his concepts, whereas he himself was far more concerned with the latter although he had sanguine faith in the former.[24]

Politics

Iyer argues distinctively about the unique Gandhian understanding of politics. His standpoint is neither similar to Augustine nor Aquinas nor Aristotle. He developed his ideas on politics from the traditional Indian doctrine of *'maya'* or illusion and was emphatic on the notion of *'moha'* or delusion or glamour. Modern conception of politics to him is delusive and ephemeral. It apparently stresses on evil and further leading to 'hypnotic and narcotic effect on the moral perception and will of man.'

Politics in its simplest meaning denotes human activity to exercise power. Power is perceived as the language of politics. The end of politics is to seek power. In politics, power is considered as an end. However, for Gandhi, power is a means to enable people to pursue their life in a better way by feasibly arranging conditions of good life. But Gandhi's indictment of modern civilization shows that he is keenly interested in a spiritual and moral politics inherently rooted in traditional Indian politics. The modern civilization is satanic civilization which is ultimately a soulless enterprise. In a material society the state and its agency is entirely corrupt. All the political institutions are instruments for multiplying wealth by coercive means

and this provides a psychological incentive connected with power. The interplay of power and moral values is the central problem of politics. Gandhi repudiated the conventional meaning of politics and introduced a wider domain of power in which the dichotomies of private and public morals got diminished and religious values and political norms got shrunk. And ethical principles and political expediency got minimized.

Gandhi just after his arrival in India, as early as 1915, felt to declare his aim and, that is, to spiritualize political life and political institutions. Returning to the traditional source of society in India, Gandhi remarked that caste organization fulfilled not only religious want of the community but also its political needs. In his autobiography, he mentioned that he was attracted into politics for his devotion to truth and that his power in political field stemmed from his spiritual experiments with himself. He condemned those who say religion has nothing to do with politics. However, his mission of entering into politics was to purify it through the introduction of *ashram* or monastic ideal into politics. Gandhi's most uncommon trait of entering into politics was by most important qualification of adopting voluntary poverty to do selfless service for wider society. There is close relationship between politics and social reform.

Gandhi approached politics imbibed with a religious spirit because he was fundamentally guided by the religious life. He addressed some missionaries thus:

> I could be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes on indivisible whole …. I do not know of any religion part from activity. It provides a moral basis of all other activities without which life would be a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing.[25]

Politics helps to build the society by reforming it. The prime task of political activities is to bring social and moral progress in society. Politics is by people through power but not by legislative assemblies. Politics helps people by taking care of people. So, it is an unavoidable end. Understanding Gandhian concept of politics leads us to see entirely both the narrower and wider connotations of it. Additionally, politics can be purified only when it is guided by religious spirit, not in the sense of sectarian values but in the sense of purified universal moral values. For Gandhi, power is not to be considered as the sole end, rather it is a means to perform purified value of oriented goals for the broader society. Gandhi did not see any virtues in detaching religion from politics. The modern western politics founded on the

strict separation of politics from religion in a strict compartmentalization sense. Religion was understood as private value strictly based on private notion of sectarian belief. Politics, as such, is a matter of public virtue guided strictly by pure public reasoning. Gandhi's vision of religious politics is entirely different from theological politics. He simply meant by religious politics as a moral ground to attach values to life to give directions in right manner. Gandhi was not at all in favour of state religion, even if there is one religion in the society. "Politics is the art of doing on the large-scale what is right and as an affair of principle it touches eternal interests and religious sentiments."[26]

Politics for Gandhi is an unavoidable task. No one can get rid of it because it pervades all forms of life. Therefore, the only way to make it purified and moral is through mixing it up with religion. Gandhi was much convinced that any movement even if it is purely political, for instance, struggle for civil rights in South Africa, is a religious movement. Gandhi says: "by religion I do not mean formal religion or customary religion but that religion which underlies all religions."[27] "Religion for Gandhi means a spiritual commitment which is total but intensely personal. He firmly believed in the fundamental unity of life, and rejected the distinction between public and private, secular and sacred."[28] Iyer again sincerely finds his views on religion as he put it: "Gandhi's view was the consequence of, and not independent of, his view of morality. He would have entirely agreed with Kant's essay: 'On the Discordance between Morals and Politics.' Kant argued that there could be a conflict between morals and politics if ethics is itself regarded as a general doctrine of prudence or expediency, a view that he wholly rejected in favour of the view that it was system of unconditionally authoritative laws in accordance with which we always ought to act. I can easily enough think of a moral politician as one who holds the principles of political expediency in such a way that they can coexist with morals: but I cannot conceive of a political moralist who fashions a system of moralist for himself so as to make it subordinated and subservient to the interest of the statesman."[29]

In this Kantian sense, Gandhi could be seen as a political moralist, he was certainly not a moral politician. His moral standpoint was absolutist in all spheres and was based upon the conviction that true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other that 'so long as the seed of morality is not watered by religion, it cannot sprout' and that if we take out the essence of all moral laws, we shall find that the attempt to do good to mankind is the highest morality.[30]

Gandhi also believed, like Kant,

> ….that the seeming antagonism between political prudence and moral convictions arises only when moralists are deficient in practice and therefore inclined to despotism. A political good must not be desired for its own sake but as a political consequence of the realization and performance of one's primary moral obligations.[31]

Gandhi was not to be accurately considered as a student of Kant, but he derived his position from the *Bhagvad Gita* as well as his own experience of religious studies. He attempted a strand of Indian philosophy into his religious understanding of politics, that is, the path of *Karma Yoga* or spiritual realization through social action. He experiences in India that the politics has been corrupted and the time has come to purify it. Politics is dangerous but not sinful or beyond redemption. Now it can be performed as a spiritual perfection as legitimate and sacred as any other spiritual path. Politics though cannot be understood through spiritualism but it can be approached continuously through a process of spiritual self-purification. Gandhi followed, in fact, the thoughts of the Buddha in framing the link between service of suffering humanity and the process of self-purification. He erased the distinction between mundane and the ultra-mundane, the natural and the supernatural. Neither *artha* (politics) nor *mokshya* (salvation) could be separated from *dharma* (social and personal morality). He recommended *artha* as an aspect of and politics as branch of ethics.

State

Gandhi visualized a limited state than a minimal state. He closely observed the nature of modern state and pointed out its coercive apparatus as harmful to individuals. As such, he was very critical about the dominant tendency of modern state: centralized, hierarchical and bureaucratic. These features do systematically constrain individual self-governance. He condemned state as a 'soulless machine.'[32] Parekh suggests that Gandhi's ideas on state got changed from 1930s onward. Gandhi reframed his experiment with state and liked forward to it as vehicle of change. It is conceived between the public opinion and holds the remedial potential to eradicate institutional injustices like his untouchability. Terchek argues that "his move to accept state action discloses a Gandhi who is willing to tolerate coercion for limited specific goals; his circumscribed endorsement of state power is not meant to promote justice but to dismantle injustice."[33]

Parel submits that "Gandhi wants a state that meets the requirements of *artha* and civic nationalism. Only in such a state can

citizen and social groups live and flourish in peace and security."[34]

As far as the functions of the state are concerned, Parel broadly outlines two major ones: securing the rights of the citizens and barricading external aggression. The function of the state in broader spectrum is understood as the role of the state above all is fixed with the adhesive of guaranteeing and securing the rights of citizens.[35] The second aspect of the state as defender of human rights is that it should be a constitutionally limited state. The state Gandhi defended was a limited liberal state. It is limited to the extent that it ensures its responsibility in protecting the rights of citizens. In case of violent and coercive operation of state, citizens must resist to it by the technique of satyagraha. It is a Gandhian principle of non-violent resistance of state abuses. Gandhi emphasized on the habitual obligation of individuals to the state. But in case of injustice, citizens should develop civil disobedience to protect their rights from the state encroachments.

Gandhi had a vision to build an ideal state in India by getting political freedom from the British. The state which he had dreamt of was expressed by the idealist term known as *Ramarajya*. Literally it means the rule by Rama, as one of the *avatars* of Vishnu, in Indian Puranic tradition. The term *Ramarajya* figuratively expresses "the reign of ideal justice, perfect democracy or the reign of self-imposed law of moral restraint."[36] Although Gandhi was vehemently criticized for using such a concept of *Ramarajya*, however, he made the meanings of the term very clear by simplifying it in terms of perfect rule by purity of heart and soul. This term has no relevance for theocratic understanding. Above all, Gandhian state was purely a secular state and he made it transparently clear when he said about *purusarthas*.

The debate among Gandhian thinkers in contemporary periods requires a brief mention. The heart of the debate lies with the argument – whether Gandhi's understanding of state can lead to reconciliation or opposition between the political and spiritual? Iyer among the earlier interpreters of Gandhian thought mentions that there is a paradox between non-violence on the one hand and the state on the other. State as soulless machine cannot accord with individuals with its very tendency of violence and coercion. Individuals with enlightened anarchism is purely a perfect condition to lead towards spiritualism. Gandhi was tilted towards the end to a stateless society. Iyer was not convinced with the argument that the pursuit of *artha* and *dharma* can go together. Parel discourages this position of Iyer and insists that this is a mistaken understanding which Gandhi wanted every one of his readers to avoid it. Parekh expresses an agonistic view of state held by Gandhi. Gandhi was not really a supporter of modern state.

This is because of the alleged opposition between *purusarthas*. The state by its very nature is unparalleled with man's spiritual and moral quests. The incompatibility between state and individuals emerges due to soulless and soul. The abstraction of soulless machine hinders in the moral progress of spirituality. The ground was not fertile for individuals to attain *moksha* within the domain of modern state. It is always in this regard urged to find an alternative space for the organized lives of individuals. Partha Chatterjee interpreted Gandhi's position from a Marxist viewpoint. He viewed that this state is utopian in nature. A vision impossible for it constructed a position between two contradictory ideas: political swaraj and true swaraj.

Freedom

Gandhian theory of freedom is commonly rooted in *Hind Swaraj*. The idea of swaraj entails two important meanings – individual and collective. At the individual level, swaraj projects human being to be self-disciplinary as well as controlling the individual passions to build a good individual in the collective society; the collective meaning of swaraj comprises the freedom from colonial rule as the first priority of every Indian. It is the political freedom demanded from the British imperialism simply on the ground of self-determination. Being an advocate of civil liberties of individual persons he stated in 1917 that a person can disobey governmental orders and declared that "the person of a citizen must be held inviolate. It can only be touched to arrest or to prevent violence."[37] He also admired most important freedom of individuals like freedom of speech and expression. Gandhi wrote:

> Freedom of speech and corresponding action is the breadth of democratic life. Freedom of propagating non-violence as substitute for war is the most relevant when indecent savagery is being perpetrated by the warring nations of Europe.[38]

In 1940, Gandhi pleaded for freedom of speech, a free press and pure justice, independence of judiciary and complete civil liberty. He also included right to legal counsel and defence as part of civil rights. He believed in economic and spiritual freedoms. The economic freedom constitutes equal distribution, adequate wages for any labourer and most important thing for doing this was to bring the state into business. In other words, state must intervene to produce an opportunity where *sarvodaya* would be possible. Everybody's good is collective good and vice-versa.

Apart from these two important meanings of it, swaraj to Gandhi comprises many other things. It is a part of truth which is God.

Freedom is considered very sacrosanct. It is the essence of man's personality. The renunciation of freedom could be attained only through severe suffering and struggle. He simply suggested to the masses in India that freedom they quest for is not going to be easily obtained but to achieve at the cost of a serious struggle. In the second Round Table Conference he said that 'the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom.'

Self-rule is the process of removing the internal obstacles to freedom. When achieved it is nothing other than spiritual freedom. Self-rule is the unique quality of an individual and found in no other living beings or brutes. Self-rule presupposes the agency of the spirit (individual *atman*). The spirit exerts its influence on the empirical ego, on emotions, and intelligence. Under the influence of the spirit, the inner powers of the moral agent become integrated, such that he/she becomes a spiritually aware person, guided by the self-knowledge. The process by which the spirit integrates the inner faculties has a dynamic quality, which is suitably expressed by the concept of 'ruling.' Hence, the terminology of self-rule is swaraj. The spirit of higher self 'rules' the lower self of empirical ego.' [39]

Self-rule/spiritual freedom is derived from *Bhagavad Gita*. Nineteen verses of the second chapter of this work draw the celebrated portrait of the person of steady wisdom, the *sthitha-prajna*. *Sthitha-prajna,* for Gandhi, is a model of self-ruling, spiritually free person.

> Self as a virtue directs the inner power of a person to their proper purposes. Gandhi draws it from the Indian tradition of Patanjali *Yogasutras*. Patanjali lists five virtues necessary for anyone contemplating the attainment of spiritual freedom. They are non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and greedlessness. Gandhi added six more virtues to the traditional list – *swadeshi,* removal of untouchability, bodily labour, control of palate, fearlessness, and respect for all religion.[40]

Self-rule is self-transformative activity. A spiritually integrated person is no longer a slave of the passions but is able to go about his daily affairs in the light of true self-knowledge. Gandhi speaks of self conversion and mental revolution, and the experience of inner freedom. Swaraj is a state of mind.

> Self-rule is not a utopian dream but a real state of affairs of which a person can have experimental evidence. Experience of self-rule would make one aware of one's duties toward others, and above all, it would make one sensitive to social injustice. That is to say, self-rule leads to deeper self-knowledge, which in turn awakens one's social and political conscience. Self-rule bridges the internal world of spiritual freedom and

the external world of political and economic freedoms. Self-rule of Gandhi is an innovative idea. Gandhi derived the idea of self-rule from the Indian tradition, but he also renovated it in some other ways. He sought to make self-rule compatible with the modern ideas of independence, individual freedom, and economic freedom.[41]

The experience of self-rule brought with it a moral concern to persuade others to become fully free: after once we have realized it, we will endeavour to the end of our life time to persuade others to do likewise.

According to the Indian tradition spiritual freedom was supposed to be an apolitical and asocial state of affairs, requiring withdrawal from the socio-political world. But he reinterprets self-rule in such a way as to give spiritual freedom a social, political and economic profile. Gandhi's own life was an experimental in making spiritual freedom socially, politically, and economically dynamic. In his autobiography, he introduced that his life goal was the attainment of spiritual freedom, which he felt he could not attain unless he entered the world of social, political, and economic action. Gandhi wrote 'All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field are directed to this end. A person who aspires after spiritual freedom and self-rule cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics'.[42]

The self-rule ought to find expression in appropriate political and economic activities. The ability to act well in the socio-economic-political arena is the test of the new meaning of self-rule. Self-rule and the inner transformation and integration that go with it, prepare one to lead the life of an active citizen. That is he believed spiritual freedom cannot remain an asocial nor an apolitical nor an atemporal condition. 'Spiritual freedom, to be truly human, has to be socially and politically active. The defence of this view constitutes one of his major contributions to political philosophy.'[43]

Swaraj for Gandhi was an all-satisfying goal for all time. He wanted India to come to her own and he believed India could do so only if it realized swaraj in all its four aspects. Why did Gandhi feel compelled to bring the four disparate aspects of freedom together? For one thing, there was the context of history. History place before him two traditions – modern western and ancient Indian. There was also a moral imperative. For he felt that the modern west had ignored the truth that humans were body/spirit composites, and as such the desire for freedom could be fully satisfied only by means of self-rule. He strongly believed that bearing witness to this ignored truth was his life mission. Full human development, he insisted, called for the development of all aspects of freedom. To pursue one aspect of freedom without simultaneously pursuing the other aspects was to distort the meaning of freedom and to

interfere with the process of human development.[44]

Equality and Justice

Gandhi's notion of equality and justice is immensely radical. He argues that equality is most important for the reason that it ensures the dignity of every individual person. It also abandons the idea of social discrimination in every society. For Gandhi, justice is the most necessary basic requirement for both individuals and society. Justice is understood as fair treatment. Justice is an ideal that empowers a person to enjoy certain natural rights like equality, equality of opportunity and liberty. Compassion is an important basis of justice. Justice is grounded on the theory of *karma* (based on the *Gita*). It is in this context an unconditional claim to some of the universal, natural, inherent and inalienable rights earned by duties.[45]

The idea of *sarvodaya* is one of the important philosophical contributions of Gandhian political theory. *Sarvodaya* as a concept is very powerful in nature for its radical consequences. It has philosophical and psychological foundations and simultaneously it has political and social implications. As a vision, *sarvodaya* emphasizes on the building a new society based on spiritual and moral values of India to meet the mounting challenges of modern India. To contextualize the meaning of *sarvodaya* is to tell the fact that restructuring of the political and social institutions on the standards set by agrarian patterns as crucial for India as such.

The philosophy of *sarvodaya* is integral and synthetic in character. *Sarvodaya,* for Gandhi, is a synthetic process for creating social and political visions in India. Its philosophical foundation lies in the primacy and ultimatums of spirit. Gandhi's ultimate aim is to realize God as an all-pervasive truth. His political, economic and social endeavours are oriented towards progressive enlargement of human consciousness through the service of *Daridra Narayan*, into the intimate and intuitive realization of the divine spirit.

Sarvodaya as a philosophical and ethical concept stands for the emancipation of all. It traces its origin to the *vedantic* tradition that from a higher standpoint all men are participants in a super-material reality. Thus the good of all beings has to be positively fostered. It repudiates the limited idea of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It aims to serve the good of all and not simply the numerical majority. It is not opposed to the social and economic equality. Since all beings are reflections or manifestations of a supreme spiritual ultimate hence all have to be provided the opportunity for their greatest

development and perfection. An ethical understanding of *sarvodaya* impels for the distribution of economic and social goods. It holds that all forms of wealth belong to society and need to be provided to all for everybody's supreme realization of *purusharthas*. In this regard, Gandhi towards the end of his life came up with an idea called trusteeship which he believed as a theory of spiritual socialism.

Rights

Gandhi was a champion of the individual rights in the society. The most important starting point for his is the political and civil rights from the British imperialism. He believed in universal human equality. He condemned imperialism and foreign exploitation. The idea of satyagraha is based on the notion of individual's inalienable right to resist a coercive social and political system. Against the claims of state omnipotence, Gandhi puts up the right of the internality of judgement. He was a political individualist, that is, equality in terms of rights and freedom. His South African experiences seem to have bitterness as far as individual rights are concerned. The experience of South Africa taught him lessons to demand for legal and political rights. He demanded social recognition of the inalienable moral worth of man as a spiritual being. For Gandhi, political rights of an individual are linked up with his moral stature and dignity. Swaraj, for Gandhi, is a highest form of individual right. It is an inalienable right of every Indian. Gandhi believed in rights and obligations as complementary to each other. So he claimed that moral and inalienable rights of man prevents all forms of coercion and strengthens individuals against untruth, injustice and wrong in any form. He was a sympathizer of special rights to the downtrodden and the oppressed ones. For him, rights are essential for the realization of good, provided moral obligations are fulfilled.

The idea of fundamental human rights, although imported from the west, got a new meaning in Indian political cannon. Gandhi calls it satyagraha. In Hind Swaraj, Gandhi defined satyagraha simply as a "method of securing rights by personal suffering: it is the reverse of resistance by arms."[46] The western tradition of rights believes in the use of violence as a means to secure the rights of the individuals. However, Gandhian way of securing rights in India can be alternatively new that suggests that it can be done by 'personal suffering.' This is a technique of satyagraha what Parekh has called 'suffering love.' Joan Bondurant has argued that self-suffering can never be acceptable as a way of securing rights to western minds.[47] Gandhi transformed the western cannon of civil disobedience to the Indian cannon of satyagraha. In his initiative for introducing the 'Fundamental Rights

and Economic Changes' with Nehru to the India Congress was phenomenal.

Conclusion

Gandhi is no doubt a theorist of modern Indian political cannon. His conceptual contributions include ideas such as swaraj, satyagraha, *sarvodaya, swadeshi, ahimsa,* nationalism, constitutionalism and *dharma* or selfless service. The development and reinvention of the concept of *purushartha* resembles the conciliation of different elements of human development.

An essentialist and cultural relativist vision of political theory offers an alternative to Anglo-American understanding of social and political realities. Gandhism in a way blends his thought by innovating the essentialist and cultural character of Indian society.

The greatest contribution, as Parel has suggested of Gandhi, to humanity is that he made a bridge between spiritual and secular which in a way something very unique of his style. Apart from all other innovations in political life like truth and non-violence, swaraj, satyagraha and religion and politics.

Notes and References

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35. Quoted in Parel, (CW, 42: 384-85), p. 53, Gandhi wrote an article in 1930 'Declaration of Independence' echoing the same as 'American Declaration of Independence.' The preamble of Gandhi's Declaration of independence read as: we believe it is the inalienable rights of Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruit of their toil and have the necessities of life so that they may

have full opportunities for growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses and has ringed Indian economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must attain purnaswaraj or complete independence

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Major Stakes in the Evolution of Enviornmental Ethics and Concerns for Today's Environmental Education

Vibin Padayadan

ABSTRACT

Environmental ethics thinks of nature as a community, not just a commodity. This ethic asks a gentle presence rather than a domineering and thoughtless one. It protects all species. It sees humans as biotic citizens who belong to land not man to whom land belongs. But what this article stresses is that this sensitivity should be concretized. This could be possible only when a firm environmental education is passed to forthcoming generations

Key words: ethics, anthropocentric, deep ecology, ecofeminism, animal rights

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IS a relatively new field of philosophical ethics, which deals particularly with the non-human natural world. Environmental ethics as a recognized field within philosophy is now entering its third decade.[1] So to say, environmental ethics is a recent arrival. Does that mean the human's relations with the environment were not ethical till then. The relations were truly ethical and harmonious. But environmental ethics came as a grave issue only after a series of incidents in the last century. The article strides through important landmarks in the evolution of environmental ethics. It would particularly streamline the stakes of land ethic, intrinsic and extrinsic value, shallow and deep ecologies

etc. in order to search for the possibilities for a universal ethic. At this point, albeit we can lay down certain universal principles, there is a strident clamour for particular interventions in each part of the globe. That is a call to intervene locally and nationally. Many things have been done in this regard. But what this article stresses is that this sensitivity should be concretized. This could be possible only when a firm environmental education is passed to forthcoming generations.

Nature had a safe and secure position in the Indian living conditions. People lived in harmony and integration with the nature. All the sacred scriptures and intellectual traditions endorsed a happy co-existence with the nature. The shanti mantra of Upanishads goes thus:

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पुर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णश्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते।।
ओ३म् शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः।।

That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (Universe) is infinite. The infinite proceeds from the infinite. (Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (Universe), it remains as the infinite alone.[2] In many of the ancient sacred texts, we see similar passages commenting on the sacred elements of nature. Albeit it had not been spelled out explicitly, it was there in the depths of human hearts acted accordingly. Tables turned round when industrialization[3] swept the scene.

Tracing the roots of industrialization will reach us into the nuances of western worldview, which propounded ill dealings with the nature. Christianity also had not been an exception in this case. Infact there are some truths in the accusation levelled against Christianity for endorsing a very anthropocentric[4] view. Aristotle, to whom Christianity also owes its due, maintains that, "nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man"[5] and that the value of other beings in the nature is merely instrumental. Western worldview either assigned intrinsic value[6] to human beings alone or they assigned a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to nature than to any non-human beings. This anthropocentric position found it problematic to articulate what is wrong with the cruel treatment of animals, plants and everything in the biotic kingdom. Once these grave crises began to rock the planet earth drastically, there emerged the issues of environmental ethics.

"A legitimate goal of ethics is to provide us with a language, with effective arguments, whereby we can claim that some kinds of actions are right or wrong, or atleast better or worse, independently of their

cultural or legal context."[7] It is high time to formulate norms regarding human dealings with the nature. We often face conflicts of interests between saving nature and providing food for needy people. Every time we ought not solve human problems by sacrificing nature. Sometimes, the non-anthropocentric values win over the anthropocentric ones. Furthermore, there should be underlying norms in between the creative dialogue between the two committed proponents of intrinsic value in nature. So, there lies a necessary and engaging invitation to sharpen the environmental ethical concerns. And more to the point, it is an urgent one.

Too often theorists describe the value of nature in itself and forgets to address the questions concerning how humans must and ought to relate with the nature? How humans can deal with the nature in the arena of emerging social problems? All these references point towards the urgent need of environmental ethics related issues.

THE LAND ETHIC

In the field of environmental ethics Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) had been the pioneer. Aldo Leopold was the supervisor of foresters in the Carson National Forest in New Mexico. He was instrumental in the development of modern environmental ethic and his ethic of nature and wildlife preservation had profound impact on environmental movements all over the world. It is Aldo Leopold who formulated the 'holist environmental ethics'[8] for the first time and it is explicit in his famous essay "Land Ethic." This is not an ethic restricted to individuals alone, but inclusive of ecosystem considered as a whole where soil, trees, rivers, animals etc. are included. This ecosystem, he called "land ethic." The land ethic, which Leopold proposes, is largely a matter of vision and attitude. It requires a sense of community which embraces "soil, water, plants and animals where human is not 'conqueror,' but simply a 'plain member and citizen."[9] In 1920s he began speaking of nature as a 'living thing' and called for attentiveness to the 'interdependent functions' of earth elements. Infact, he not only calls for a practical scientific approach towards nature but also a religious one. Leopold remarks: "God started his show a good million years before he had any men for an audience…it is just barely possible that God himself likes to hear birds sing and see flowers grow."[10] This is one of the relatively few religious references in Aldo's works.

He elucidates further by reviewing the history of ethics. Looking at the history of ethics, he sees a pattern. The history of ethics seems to be ever expanding its horizons. From the western point of view, earlier it did not include slaves, African-Americans, women, foreigners in its moral circle and even denied rights to them. Ethics was thought

of as only relevant to individuals – individual relations illustrated by the Ten Commandments[11] and this hardly included slaves at the beginning. This ethics eventually expanded and included all of them. That's why one can say the history of ethics is evolving and expanding. In this process, the next logical step is to include the individual relations with the land i.e. to expand moral considerations to animals, to plants, to species, to ecosystems and to the whole earth.[12]

Aldo furnishes his arguments: "If ethical considerations govern the individual relations between individuals and the community around them, why do we restrict our understanding of that community only to the human community? Do not the communities we live in include the myriad of other living things with whom we share the earth, with whom we have entwined destinies?"[13] All entities in nature are bound up together. Then why should only humans count?

One of the problems in conserving the 'land community' is economic value. Everything is considered in terms of economic values. Unfortunately not more than fifteen per cent of the plants, insects and animals can be sold, fed, eaten or otherwise put to any economic use. Nonetheless, these creatures are members of the biotic community. When one of these non-economic categories is threatened, and if we happen to love it, we will find some way to attach economic importance to them. For example, at the beginning of the twentieth century songbirds seemed to be disappearing. Thanks to the Ornithologists[14] who jumped to the rescue of songbirds saying that the insects would eat us up if birds failed to control them. The evidence had to be economic in order to be valid. In depth it is a matter of disgust when the biotic members are considered merely in terms of economic advantages.

Ultimately, the criterion for environmental ethics devised by Aldo and still propagated by many environmental ethicists is this: " Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."[15]

INTRINSIC AND INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

One important issue of debate in environmental ethics is value theory.[16] Issues are these: what is considered to be valuable and from where does such value come from? A number of differing issues are raised by this question. It could be well explained by drawing the distinction between instrumental value and intrinsic value. "Instrumental value is value assigned to something because of its usefulness, as a means to end". Example, water. Water is of instrumental value when it helps human being to remain alive. For another example, a certain wild

plant may have instrumental value because it provides the ingredients for some medicine or as an aesthetic object for human observers. On the other hand, "intrinsic value is the value of things as ends in themselves regardless whether they are useful or not."[17] For example, we do not value our lives for any reason beyond themselves. Usually we do not preserve our lives as means to an end, but rather as an end in itself. Value of this kind is known as intrinsic value.

The discussion on intrinsic values naturally led us into the confusion about the origin of such values. The question is this: are these values created by human beings or are they already in existence? It is the subject of great debate. The debate is intense between value subjectivists and value objectivists.[18] Value subjectivists claim that intrinsic value is something humans create and attach to their own lives. Value objectivists think that intrinsic value is something already existing in the world and humans do not create it, but rather recognize it, which is already present in the world.

When these themes are brought into environmental ethics, there are a number of varied opinions. More convincing one is of Holmes Rolston who says that value in the natural world is objective. "It pre-exists human beings, is located in individuals, species, ecosystems and evolutionary processes and would continue even if humans were to become extinct."[19] Natural world objectively contains intrinsic value and it does not have to care whether it is useful to human being or not.

THE CONCERNS OF SHALLOW AND DEEP ECOLOGIES

Shallow ecology is understood to be that personal and political view which, in its entrenched anthropocentrism, regards the natural world and its species merely as resources "for us" and ascribes value instrumentally on the basis of service to human interests, often very short rage ones.[20]

Whereas, deep ecology is the argument for the intrinsic value or the inherent worth of the environment. Arne Naess[21] has infact formulated a "platform" for deep ecology. The platform has eight proposals, which Naess described as 'axiology'. It can be summarized thus:

1) Recognition of the equal intrinsic value of all beings;

2) Affirmation of multiplicity, diversity and complexity as values in themselves;

3) Permissibility of human use or killing of living beings or disruption of the environment solely to meet vital needs;

4) Decrease in human population;

5) Acknowledgement that humans are at present inhibiting and

violating vital life processes;

6) Profound socio-economic policy changes based on cultural philosophical changes as a counteraction to ecologically damaging practices and mindsets;

7) Emphasis on 'life quality' rather than on 'standard of living;'

8) Moral obligation to action on the part of all who affirm platform principles 1-7.[22]

In nutshell, the prominent issue at discussion is the 'rights' question. Deep ecology suggests that rights are not only possession of human beings but also of beings who are affected by human beings. So, deep ecologists ascribe intrinsic value to non-human beings. Ascribing "intrinsic value to all being" is also asserting a "right to live" for all beings.[23] Here the right to live is not absolute, but the suspension of that right for any being must be subjected to stricter standards. Arne Naess, the originator of the term 'deep ecology' says that the vision of deep ecology is biocentric, radically egalitarian and sometimes polemic. The platform is a set of general principles and practical maxims which are meant to guide individual human behaviour and socio-political decisions concerning the environment.[24]

There is a problem, rather a confusion lying here. If all things in the biosphere have the intrinsic right to live and blossom, can we kill the animals for food? If so, will it not be denying its right to live? More precisely, that will be a threat to the basic intuition that all organisms and entities in the ecosphere are equal in intrinsic worth. Arne Naess himself suggests that biocentric equality, as an intuition is true in principle, although in the process of living, all species use each other as food, shelter etc. Mutual predation is a biological fact of life.[25] The basic intuition is that we should live with the minimum than maximum impact on co-existing (especially non-human) beings. Unfortunately, in today's technocratic world, there is overwhelming propaganda and advertising which encourages false needs and desires to promote increased production and consumption. And in reality, our material needs are probably more simpler than many realize. Considering the 'right to live' issue again, some extremist deep ecologists would even say, in order to preserve 'the right to live' of animals, all human beings should become vegetarians. Those who take such extreme stand on vegetarianism are indirectly forced to say that the entire plant kingdom have no right to their own existence. And the issue becomes much starker than we think.

ETHICS OF ECO FEMINISM

Ecological feminism[26] was born of an awareness of women's potential for bringing about an ecological revolution and it was based on a

conviction that the illogic of the logic of domination on nature and women must be exposed. The aim of ecofeminists is not merely establishing more egalitarian relations, but it is also retrieving a sense of the sacred. With the loss of the sense of the sacred, there can be the demise of the organic view of the planet.

Ecofeminists are not satisfied with the criticisms levelled against anthropocentrism. At this point, they make a clear distinction that the source of eco-destruction is not merely anthropocentrism; but it is androcentrism, the predominance of male domination over the societal construction and norm making.[27]

An eco-feminist eco-ethic is said to be biocentric and eco-centric. They hold that every unique part of the whole has 'intrinsic value' and yet cannot be treated as separate from the whole. Inspite of these characteristics, because of its appeal for the feminization of consciousness, is addressed to be gynocentric[28] and thus unwittingly anthropocentric.

Nevertheless, one cannot deny the truth in what Ariel Salleh said: "The deep ecology movement will not truly happen until men are brave enough to rediscover and to love the woman inside themselves. And we women, too, have to be allowed to love what we are, if we are to make a better world."[29]

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND ISSUES

Advocates of animal rights believe that more than just reform of the existing system is needed. When a system is unjust to the core, abolition, not reform is what respect for justice demands. So mere animal welfare projects or anti-cruelty movements[30] are not adequate measures to meet the present crises. The objective of 'animal rights' advocates is not to provide animals larger cages or stalls, but to empty them.

Before we delve into the issue deeply, it is worthy to locate the place of animal rights issue in environmental ethics. Infact, those aspects are really vague. The following question will put things in the right place. Does an environmental ethic advocate moral concern for natural individuals, for species, for ecosystems or perhaps nature as a whole? An answer to this question is required before we judge the relationship between animal liberation and environmental ethics. Unfortunately, there is no clear-cut answer for this question. Furthermore, several versions of answers make a problematic of environmental and moral conclusions. That will give rise to the interpretation of environmental ethic as a complex balancing of different kinds of moral concerns.[31] That again shoots troubles for the extremist animal liberation ethicists.

Like ecofeminists, 'animal rights' thinking rejects dualistic, mechanistic Cartesian thought. Empirical observations of awareness,

feeling, preferences and the pursuit of certain 'interests' on the part of animals laid the groundwork for much of the 'animal rights' movement in ethics. In short sentience was the criterion. Sentience is having the power to experience a sense of pain and pleasure. It is a natural argument that we should extend obligation to entities in the world that have such a capacity. It is not right to cause suffering to a being of this capacity. In that case animals, like humans, have the capacity to feel pain and pleasure. The sentience criteria should command obligations to animals also.[32] Then other living beings like plants and non-living things like stones, as far as we know, do not have the capacity to feel pain and pleasure. So, by the criteria of sentience, they do not have value in themselves. Then what comes to the rescue of plants and rocks? It is argued that sentience is a part but not all of what gives value to things. There are beings who do not have sentience, but at the same time have a claim to rights because of their other capacities – capacities to grow, capacity to develop and flourish etc. We are obliged to respect anything, which has the capacity to flourish and develop.

More precisely, the fundamental premises for animal liberation thinking are these: the higher animals, primates atleast and perhaps all mammals, "have beliefs and desires." They can be said "to retain a psychophysical identity over time." They "have a kind of autonomy – preference autonomy." These qualities qualify animals for status as 'moral patients' and lead 'rights' or 'liberation' ethicists to judge that animals enjoy "the basic moral right to respectful treatment" and that human moral agents have a "prima facie duty not to harm" animals.[33] For Peter Singer, one of the prominent animal rights ethicists, this results in a moral prohibition of meat eating and an insistence on the obligation of vegetarianism. For Tom Regan, another animal rights ethicist, it leads to the condemnation of 'animal agriculture,' hunting, trapping and testing on animals in educational programmes, cosmetic making, scientific researches etc.

Currently the movement specifically argues for the animals, which can register some level of pain and pleasure. Furthermore, non-sentient animals are on the margins, which also have claims to rights. For this reason, despite the talk about egalitarian interests, it brings about a type of hierarchicalism in animal rights thoughts and cause segregation disregarding lower animals and plants as non-sentient.

IS A UNIVERSAL ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC POSSIBLE?

The next pertinent question falls here is the possibility of a universal environmental ethic. Is a universal environmental ethic possible? David Harvey says: "Of course it is impossible – of course it is desirable."[34]

The environmental movement is staggering between some of the major axes of differentiation. Each of the axes produces its own polarized sense of how to formulate environmental ethic. And the net result is a plethora of confusing conceptions. Let us look at the major axes of differentiation. First, eco-centric views versus anthropocentric views. Are justice and ethics natural virtues? If so, who is privileged to know or interpret natural virtues and ethics for us? Or are they simply societal constructs for the sake of functional facility in society? Secondly, individualistic views versus communitarian view. Is justice can only be attached to clearly identified individuals or the status of individuals can be given to non-human animals, trees or whole eco system? Or is there some collectivity, which prevails over and above everything?[35] Thirdly, materialistic views versus spiritual concerns. Materialistic and economic views are based on material possibilities and are frequently opposed to spiritual or religious readings. Cultural and historic views also pose many threats.

Albeit, various sects differ in their opinions we must search for a strong and consistent environmental ethic acknowledging the risks if done so. Without elaborating much on the issue, I wind up with a quote: "There are many ways to think of some environmental ethic. The problem of conflict between universality and particularity that arises out of uneven geographical development and cultural differentiation is obviously important, but it is equally important to think about the parallel problem of arbitrating between radically different environmental discourses."[36]

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Our age is particularly marked by the presence of two powerful tools such as information and technology to change. It could effect a change in the behaviour — be it economic, cultural or social. And we see drastic changes in all these domains since the arrival of information age. Considering this fact, we acknowledge that the knowledge of adverse environmental effects on earth planet can sensitivise people and make them move towards better resolutions and actions. For example, knowledge of goods which cause damage to the environment can induce consumers to change their purchase behaviour away from the polluting products or firms. At least, that can induce the consumers to opt for less damaging alternatives. Added to that, an environmentally educated society can influence the government policies in order it to be environment friendly. The emergence and flourishing of information age in India provides a unique feature to the environmental management system emerging in the country. It is the right medium to facilitate environmental education and information

dissemination.[37] For example, rural information networking can bring in drastic changes in services to villages. This could not only be instrumental for environmental awareness, but also for a development of villages without the kind of environmentally costly urbanization so far we have witnessed.

As we know, the time is ripe to disseminate information and knowledge with regard to the environment. Now let us enquire into the major stakes involved in environmental education. The task of environmental education is to transform the attitudes and behaviour of the society. To make a sustainable environmental education, it should make environmental education available to people of all ages. In this regard, the children should be considered as an important contingent, who are to take the rein soon. Environmental concepts should be included in all educational programmes with the analysis of major issues.[38] This could be well implemented by involving children in local and regional studies on environmental health such as drinking water, sanitation of the locality, food etc. Here one question may arise: how to infuse this approach to school children? This could be done for example, by relating the concepts of environmental education with the concepts of physics, chemistry, biology etc. The result is that no new subject is added to the carriculum and the understanding is more integrated. It is true that there have been attempts to inculcate environmental concerns at various levels. What we need is a refinement, criticism and implementation of the ideals into praxis.

CONCLUSION

In the present world, from the socio ecological point of view, there is environmental apartheid.[39] Since it is an appropriation of the resources and wealth of society by a small minority, the majority is often pushed to the marginalized existence without access to the necessary resources for their well-being. Environmentally, the apartheid is still more serious. Globalization has made it happen that the natural resources of the poor are systematically taken over by the rich and the pollution of the rich is systematically dumped on the poor. Ultimately the poor have to bear the blame of eco-destruction also.

Whatever be the situation, there is a need for new ethics. Middlemen and innumerable physical gadgets separated man from the land. He has no vital relation to the land. For him land is the space between cities on which crops grow. Our educational system has clearly headed away from the land. It is high time to formulate an ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants, which grow upon it. In environmental ethics what humans want to value is not compassion, charity or fairness. But what humans want

to value is a projective and pro-life system in which harmony, interdependence and ever continuing life are virtues.[40] Environmental ethics thinks of nature as a community, not just a commodity. This ethic asks a gentle presence rather than a domineering and thoughtless one. It protects all species. It sees humans as biotic citizens who belong to land not man to whom land belongs.[41] The need of the hour is the conscientisation of the environmental issue to the public. This could be achieved through various measures such as programming curriculums for children, awareness programmes through internet and mass media etc.

The dictums like "survival of the fittest" should be interpreted in the sense of ability to co-exist and co-operate in complex relationships rather than ability to kill or exploit. The emergence of new dictums like 'think like a mountain,' 'listening to land,' 'living lightly' etc. are really comforting and inspiring.

Notes and References

1. There is even a society established. The International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE) has four hundred members in twenty countries and maintains an extensive website, with a major bibliography (some 10000 entries) at http: //www.cep.unt.edu/isee.html.
2. This Shanti mantra is seen at the outset of Isavasya Upanishad, Brihadyaranyaka Upanishad etc.
3. In industrialization we are thinking of a society that makes great use of machinery, conducts its operations in industry and commerce on large-scale, and supplies the needs of its simplest members by an elaborate series of worldwide exchanges.
4. Anthropocentrism is a system of thinking which treats man as the centre of interests. Earlier proponents were persons like Socrates, who was only interested in problems of human conduct and Protagoras who regarded man as the measure of all things. That line stretches farther wide.
5. http://Plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/
6. Intrinsic value will be explained in detail later.
7. Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics* (London: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2003), p. 6.
8. Holist environmental ethics is in contrast with all individualist positions. This approach towards environmental ethics seems to be consequentialist rather than de-ontological.
9. Leopold, in Susan L. Flader and Baird Callicott, eds., *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 44 – 45.

10. Ibid., pp. 94 – 96.
11. Ten Commandments is a reference to the Bible, specially to the Old Testament. It is the revelation of God announced to Moses as the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai. It is the Law of the covenant and moral norms.
12. Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics,* p. 7.
13. Ibid..
14. Ornithologists are the scientists who study the science of birds.
15. Mark J. Smith, ed., *Thinking Through Environment: A Reader* (London: Routledge Publications, 1999), p. 195.
16. Value Theory, also called axiology, the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of value and what kinds of things have value. Construed very broadly, value theory is concerned with all forms of value, such as the aesthetic values of beauty and ugliness, the ethical values of right, wrong, obligation, virtue and vice and the epistemic values of justification and lack of justification. Presently, for the convenience sake, we deal with the ethical aspects of value theory.
17. Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics,* p. 16.
18. Value objectivists hold the view that the objects of the most basic concepts of ethics exist objectively and the statements by different persons make the same factual claims. Value subjectivists usually mean the doctrine that ethical statements are reports on the speaker's feelings, which may be objectively true or false.
19. Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics,* p. 17.
20. Pamela Smith, *Environmental Ethics* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 8.
21. Arne Naess is the originator of the term 'deep ecology' and the philosophical progenitor of the 'green deep ecology movement.' Other than that he is Spinoza scholar and a proponent of Gandhian non-violence.
22. Elaborate version of the platform can be found in Warwick Fox, *Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston: Shambalal Publishers, 1990), pp. 114 – 115.
23. Smith, *Environmental Ethics*, pp. 11-12.
24. Ibid., 5.
25. Smith, *Thinking Through,* p. 201.
26. The term 'ecofeminisme' was first coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne and introduced to the English-speaking world in 1974.
27. Smith, *Environmental Ethics*, p. 20.
28. Gynocentric means centred on and concerned exclusively with women. This word is used specially from a feminist's point of view.
29. Ariel Salleh, "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-feminist Connection", *Environmental Ethics 6* (1984), p. 345.
30. Anti-cruelty movements are societal opposition to cruelty to animals, especially opposition that has the force of law. It is a recent

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39. Apartheid literally means separate development. But in practice, apartheid is more appropriately described as a regime of exclusion. In the case of legislation it protects a privileged minority and excludes the majority.
40. Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics,* p. 208.
41. Smith, *Environmental Ethics*, p. 49

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Non-violent Resistance and Satyagraha as Alternatives to War – the Nazi Case

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ABSTRACT

The Nazi tyranny in Europe was eventually brought to an end by war but only at enormous cost in lives and material destruction. As an alternative to war the potential effectiveness of non-violent resistance (NVR) is examined. Some historical cases of resistance to the Nazis are described which are of two main types: NVR by the general population, and rescuing of Jews. The latter is widely recognised and there is a large literature on this; the former is less recognised. A good deal of this resistance was successful but limited. However, if used on a larger scale NVR could make long term occupation by a foreign country very difficult. A Gandhian approach – satyagraha – would be somewhat different from the pragmatic NVR actually used, most notably in its open rather than clandestine methods. Satyagraha can be viewed not only as a more moral means of defence but also as a less costly alternative to military defence.

Key words: Non-violent Resistance, Nazis, Jews, Rescuers, Costs of War, Alternatives to War, Gandhi, Satyagraha.

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR most of the countries of Europe were occupied by the armed forces of Germany. Military resistance had proved ineffective even in the case of powerfully armed France. However, a civilian or non-violent resistance developed during the occupation on a scale that is not often acknowledged. Two examples of this resistance follow.

In April 1940, the armed forces of Nazi Germany invaded Norway

and were met by armed resistance until the Norwegians surrendered two months later. It was not long before the occupiers closed the parliament and dissolved political parties except for the fascist Nasjonal Samling led by Vidkun Quisling.

In February 1942, the Germans allowed Quisling to take office as Minister President. He immediately proclaimed a law creating the Norwegian Teachers' Union which was intended to be the beginning of the creation of a corporate state. Underground civilian resistance had been developing for some time and now a group of school teachers met secretly to plan opposition to the fascist union.

The first action was for teachers to send immediately letters of objection to the Ministry of Education. 10,000 out of 14,000 teachers sent letters but continued to work. The Ministry announced closure of the schools for a month, pretending that there was a shortage of fuel during the winter. Now parents objected to the Government's new youth organisation and more than 100,000 letters, coordinated to arrive on the same day, were received by the Ministry. The authorities reacted by arresting 1000 male teachers and sending them to prison camps where they were ill-treated. When after two months few of the teachers had relented about 650 were selected and transported to a port in the Arctic Circle where they were forced to unload ships in terrible conditions.

Even while these teachers were suffering in sub-zero temperatures the schools reopened and the teachers read statements to their pupils affirming their intention of non-compliance with the Government's ideology and plans. In a speech in a high school in May 1942, Quisling shouted: "You teachers have destroyed everything for me."[1]

Starting in August and through to November, all the teachers were released, each batch being greeted by enthusiastic crowds at the railway stations. Some time later Hitler ordered the abandonment of the attempt to set up a corporate state in Norway.[2]

Another example is from Nazi Germany itself. In February 1943, the regime decided to remove the remaining Jews from Berlin. Jews married to non-Jews had up till then been exempt from deportation to the extermination camps. Around 2,000 Jews, mainly men, who had been working in factories were removed to a collection point at Rosenstrasse in the centre of Berlin. When their spouses realised their husbands had not returned from work they made enquiries and discovered where they were being held. Many of them proceeded to the Rosenstrasse building and shouted for the release of their husbands and threatened to break into the building. They later dispersed but agreed to gather again the next morning. Traffic was diverted to try to prevent many getting there but over a thousand managed to

continue the protest throughout the day with some women leaving after a while and others arriving. SS guards threatened to fire on them but the women simply dispersed to alleys and courtyards and then returned to shout for the release of their husbands. Word of the demonstration spread to many ordinary Berliners and the Gestapo were hesitant to fire in case it stirred protest by the general public. The Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, decided to release the 1,700 men after a week of detention and cancel the deportation to Auschwitz. In May, Goebbels declared Berlin to be *judenfrei* (free of Jews) although it was untrue.[3]

These two examples show not only that it is possible to use non-violent resistance against a ruthless opponent but that it is possible to win in certain circumstances. All over occupied Europe a variety of non-violent resistance (NVR) groups sprang up, on a greater scale in some countries than others, but especially in those countries with strong democratic traditions such as Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway. These actions were largely a spontaneous response to occupation by a foreign power and were non-violent in the sense of using unarmed resistance partly because arms were difficult to come by. With time, armed resistance often developed alongside unarmed resistance but in some cases there was a principled non-violence that arose from the resisters' Christian beliefs or knowledge of Gandhi's satyagraha.

The number of participants in cases of NVR ranged from single individuals to large sections of the population such as the Norwegian teachers and parents. The resisters' faith or ideology was diverse and included Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, humanism, communism and democratic socialism. They could be of any social class, highly educated or having basic education, poor or wealthy.

Not everyone participated in resistance, whether armed or unarmed, and most of the populations developed some accommodation with the occupier – with usually a small minority actively collaborating.

Methods of Non-violent Action

The forms of NVR used were many and can be recognised in the classification of Gene Sharp – Protest & Persuasion, Intervention, Social, Economic & Political Non-Cooperation.[4] Some examples of these used against the Nazis are listed below.[5]

Protest & Persuasion

Wearing of symbols which included paper-clips (indicating 'keep

together'), 'V' for Victory sign, clothing and flowers of significant colours.

Leaflet, poster and graffiti distribution.
Letters of protest, sometimes private, sometimes public.
Marches, often on significant dates.
Rallies and pilgrimages, sometimes involving singing.
Attendance at funerals of Nazi opponents.
Staying at home.
Telling of anti-regime jokes.

Intervention

Hiding people sought by the Nazis.
Freeing political prisoners or Jews.
Underground press.
Listening to forbidden radio broadcasts.
Supplying documents to the persecuted.

Social Non-cooperation

Jews refusing to wear the Yellow Star.
Boycotting cinemas, theatres, concerts, sport events.
Strikes by actors.
Ostracising German soldiers and other members of the regime.

Economic Non-cooperation

Refusal to be conscripted for work.
Striking.
Slow working.
Sabotaging manufactures.

Political Non-cooperation

Resigning from posts.
Refusing to join official organisations.
Refusing to register.
Refusing oaths of loyalty to the regime.
Refusing to be conscripted.
Refusing to be deported.

Something which Gandhi set great store by in his own campaigns could be a added as a separate category – Constructive Action.

Constructive Action

Hiding and rescuing of individuals in danger.
Setting up and distributing relief funds.

Establishing underground institutions.
German officials informing of impending round-ups.

Resistance by the individual can be the outcome of an ethical position, an unwillingness to accept the actions of an immoral regime without protest even if in immediate practical outcome it appears futile. Some individuals will resist no matter what the cost to themselves. However, all regimes are dependent on the consent of a substantial proportion of the population to function – without that they will fall in time, even if using terror. A regime that has come to power through invasion of another country is particularly vulnerable as the occupying force is seen as alien. On the other hand, people generally want a normal life where they have freedom to do what they want, bring up their family, have the essentials of life, so that a certain level of dissatisfaction needs to be felt before it will lead to widespread resistance.

Reactions to Ruthless Oppression

Poland under the Nazis displayed the difficulty for an oppressor if it uses extreme ruthlessness – it will often lead to a backlash. The Poles were regarded as racially inferior by the Germans and Hitler thought also that Germany needed more land to expand into to fulfil its aims of greatness (after all it didn't have much of an empire compared to the British). One of the first actions against the Poles was the closure of its famous Cracow University with all of its professors being sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany. All secondary schools and scientific institutes were closed and the teaching of Polish language and history were officially abolished. Radio and theatres were closed down.[6] Many villages were cleared of their Polish population to make way for ethnic Germans.

But this repression did not lead to the destruction of Polish culture but rather to a determination that it should survive. Because technical colleges remained open they were used clandestinely to teach Polish language and history as well. About 18,000 students took their baccalaureate exam underground. University courses were taught secretly in theology, law, medicine and the arts and the students, who took an oath of secrecy when enrolling, were awarded university degrees. Academic papers continued to be published.[7]

This underground activity extended to the establishing of a parliament with the four main political parties, a civil service, courts, a secret army and a coordinating committee covering other areas such as religion, economics and education.[8]

The Plight of the Jews

Even more oppressed than the Poles were the Jews who were spread across Europe, sometimes thinly, as in Norway, or in much larger numbers in eastern Europe. Initially, the approach of the Nazis to the Jews was to expel them from German territory but during the war this developed into a programme of extermination, mainly by transporting them to extermination camps which were established in Poland.

Unlike the various nationalities in the different states occupied the Jews were spread throughout the countries of Europe and this made it more difficult for them to unite in opposition. Furthermore, Jews had often been discriminated against especially in the eastern European states due to long existing prejudice and, being vulnerable, resistance did not come easily to most of them. In Germany under the Nazis escape was an option for those who had some money and more than half of the German Jewish population did leave Germany for other countries from 1933 when the Nazis took over until early in the war when Jews were prevented from emigrating. German Jews organised to help people emigrate but there were few organisations in Europe which did help in this collective manner. One of the few was the Jewish Scouts in France who turned themselves into a rescue organisation for Jewish children who were hidden or helped to escape abroad. The Scouts were finally dissolved in 1943 after saving several thousand children.[9]

An individual Jewish rescuer was Hungarian Laszlo Szamosi who bought Christian identity papers for himself and using information he and his wife obtained from Jewish children in a home they made up Swiss passports for their parents which they took to the detention camps to get them released. Working with diplomats from neutral countries in Budapest many thousands of Jews were saved.[10] In Venice, Giuseppe Jona, Professor of Medicine and leader of the the Jewish community there destroyed the records of Venetian Jewry and then killed himself to prevent the Nazis getting hold of the names.

Apart from their relative isolation there were other reasons for the devastating loss of European Jews during the war which will be dealt with later and suggestions will also be made drawing on Gandhian ideas which might have done something to mitigate their plight.

One of the main forms of non-violent action used during the war was to hide Jews and others being sought by the occupying forces. This was done on a large-scale throughout the occupied countries. Individuals were often hidden in flats in towns and in country houses

and farm buildings but also in commercial buildings (like the Frank family in Amsterdam), schools (in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France), monasteries and convents (as in Assisi) and other religious buildings. In some hiding places there was considerable space for those in hiding, in others it was very cramped such as a hidden partitioned space in a house. All rescuers took great risks and in Poland the penalty for hiding someone was death.

Hiding normally required several people who could help, such as supplying food or moving those hidden to other hiding places when one became dangerous. Illness could pose major problems as did disposal of the body when someone died. There were often networks of rescuers, sometimes numbering hundreds. Miep Gies, one of those who sheltered the Frank family, estimated that around 20,000 Dutch people were rescuers.[11] Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Centre in Jerusalem, has identified more than 26,000 Righteous Among the Nations who helped save Jews during the war. Pinchas Lapide in *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* claimed that 860,000 Jews were saved by Roman Catholics alone. Philip Friedman in *Their Brothers' Keepers* claimed that one million Jews were saved by non-Jews. It is impossible to have precise figures but these estimates give a clear picture of a remarkable effort to save fellow human beings in danger.

The greatest single rescue of Jews was in Denmark in 1943. The number of Danish Jews was rather small at 8,500 and Denmark's occupation was unique in that the Germans agreed to the Danes running internal affairs in return for supplies of agricultural and industrial goods. However, after three years of increasing tension the agreement broke down and the deportation of Danish Jews began to be planned. It was decided that the round-up would begin on 1 October 1943, but this did not go ahead as planned due to an attaché at the German Embassy called Georg Duckwitz. He had been trying to get the round-up called off but without success, so he leaked the information to a Danish MP who in turn alerted the Jewish leadership and the news spread rapidly, followed by Jews being taken into hiding by other Danish citizens. This was followed by the Jews being moved to the coast where they were put on small boats to be taken to Sweden. The result was that within a few days more than 7,000 Danish Jews were safely in neutral territory while fewer than 500 were found and deported to Germany where they were not sent to an extermination camp and thus most survived to see the war's end.[12]

General Resistance in One Country

Belgium was a country where NVR operated in several spheres of society demonstrating both strengths and weaknesses of the resistance.

Upon occupation of the country the Government decided to go into exile, eventually settling in London, and King Leopold surrendered the armed forces. The Germans ruled directly with the help of the Belgian civil service especially the General Secretaries who headed the different departments. The General Secretaries tried to prevent anti-Jewish orders being published in 1940, but they were pressured into applying them even although the orders were not published. On 11 November 1940, the anniversary of the end of the First World War, large demonstrations were held in the main cities. The judges remained in post but in 1942 all criticism of regime decisions by Supreme Court judges was made a punishable offence. The judges then stayed away from work but they were arrested and threatened with the death penalty. However, this was not carried out and they were released and went back to work. But not wanting to have a complete break with the regime led them to compromise on other orders including the deportation of workers and Jews to Germany.[13]

Two officials who resisted orders were the Director-General of Belgian railways who refused to release employees for work in Germany, and the Mayor of Brussels, J. F. van de Meulebroeck, who refused to dismiss senior staff and so was removed from office and the city administration was fined. At the end of 1941, Brussels University staff stopped teaching, when Nazi staff were introduced but they continued teaching their students, in secret. In 1943, 6,000 students went underground to avoid labour service.

Belgium was a strongly Catholic country with half of the population being educated in Catholic schools and there were even Catholic unions which were the largest unions in the country. Cardinal Joseph van Roey initially wrote private letters of protest to the head of Government General Falkenhausen but later came out publicly in 1943 with a strong objection to forced labour. Workers who had earlier come out on strike for improved food supplies and against a tax now struck against labour conscription. 60,000 workers stopped work in the industrial area of Liège which then spread to other areas resulting in the Germans suspending their plans.[14]

As everywhere, there were collaborators but many Belgians came to the rescue of Jews and the great majority of the latter were immigrants who had fled from Poland and Germany. A Committee for the Defence of the Jews (CDJ) was set up and when a Jewish Council was established by the Germans to smooth the deportation of Jews, the CDJ managed to get a member on to the Council so that they were aware of German plans. The CDJ made a large effort to persuade Jews not to turn up at the collection point used for deportation to Germany. Instead Belgians helped to hide Jews and

supply them with essentials. Importantly, the police did not cooperate with the round-ups and railway workers obstructed the deportation process and sometimes released Jews from trains. 4,000 Jewish children and 10,000 adults were placed in hiding and more than half of the 50,000 Jews in Belgium survived.[15]

The Costs of War

It is often assumed that NVR is limited in effect and that in a case like the Nazi state only counter-violence will achieve the desired end. Certainly Nazi Germany was destroyed by the Allies but only at enormous cost. The Second World War, leaving aside the Pacific sphere of conflict, resulted in the death of approximately 45 million human beings, two-thirds of whom were civilians. The injured were probably several times that, and millions of refugees were created. Then there was the vast material destruction of houses, schools, hospitals, factories, and cultural treasures. Gandhi's advice to the British people was pertinent: "I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war."[16]

Another aspect is the moral effect of the determination to win the war at all cost. Thus the bombing of cities which inevitably resulted in large numbers of civilian deaths; indeed the British in the later part of the war deliberately tried to destroy the morale of the German population by saturation bombing which turned cities into infernos. At the end of the war there were also reprisals by populations that had suffered at the hands of the Germans, particularly in eastern Europe that included killing of German civilians simply because they were German. The weakening effect of six years of all-out warfare on moral restraint led to the willingness to recruit many former Nazis into service of the Allies, particularly that of the United States, as they now had another enemy to combat – the Soviet Union. The war also permitted the extension of Soviet-style Communism into other countries of Europe for decades to come and, more fatefully still, the development of the supreme weapon of mass destruction – nuclear bombs.

The Moral Equivalent of War

There is however an alternative to deadly conflict. This 'Moral

Equivalent of War,' a phrase used by American philosopher, William James, before the First World War, was applied by British philosopher Howard Horsburgh in his *Nonviolence and Aggression* (OUP 1968) to Gandhi's satyagraha.

The non-violent actions used during the Second World War were mostly pragmatic reactions to dire situations and although having a lot in common with satyagraha there were also important differences. One is that Gandhi believed that the opponent must be regarded as a fellow human being who is capable of changing for the better. Ideally Gandhi believed that the action should convert one's opponents and not coerce them. Most of the NVR used against the Nazis was more focused on power relationships. In practice, however, the distinction may not be so great.

There is one important difference between a Gandhian approach and most of the NVR used in WWII. Gandhi gave supreme place to truth whereas most of the NVR involved secrecy, deception, lies, even bribery. It may be that most people would feel justified in using such methods in an extreme situation where it is the life of human beings that is at stake, a case where the good end justifies the means used. It is unlikely that Gandhi would have accepted that argument but there are other approaches that could avoid that dilemma. Some of the WWII resisters grappled with this moral difficulty, for example the Protestant pastor André Trocmé and his wife Magda, hid many Jewish children in and around the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in southern France but were unhappy with the secrecy that required. However, they did not deny to the authorities that they did hide Jews but only that they would not tell them where they were hidden. This, along with other forms of non-cooperation was sufficient for most children to remain undetected.[17]

The Nazis, the Jews and Satyagraha

A unique feature of the Nazi era was the attempt to wipe out the Jewish population of Europe (known as the Shoah or Holocaust). In fact the Nazis succeeded in murdering about 6 million which was approximately two-thirds of the total Jewish European population. This was done in part by mass shootings, in part by the construction of extermination camps using poison gas, and in part by starvation and casual brutality. A fanatical minority directed this heinous crime but it was necessary for many ordinary people to be willing to be participants in various ways and for the majority of the German population to be indifferent to the fate of their fellow citizens.

As for the Jews themselves they were often misled as to their fate by the deliberate actions of the Nazis as the latter used

euphemisms such as 'resettlement,' telling the victims to pack their possessions which in fact would be taken from them when they reached their destination, even forcing Jews in concentration camps to send postcards to relatives still free telling how good their new situation is. But the Jews themselves found it difficult to believe their ultimate fate such is the nature of the human mind. Even when a few Jews escaped from camps and managed to return to the ghettos they had come from and told of their experiences they were often disbelieved – the human mind could not face the terrible reality.

Nevertheless, there were Jews who did face the reality and resisted and tried to convince others to do the same. But it has to be acknowledged that there were far fewer than there might have been. Wladyslav Szpilman, who survived the Shoah to become a distinguished pianist and write his memoirs, wrote: "It is a disgrace to us all. We're letting them take us to our death like sheep to the slaughter. If we attacked the Germans, half a million of us, we could break out of the ghetto, or at least die honorably, not as a stain on the face of history."[18] Shmuel Zygelboym tried to prevent the formation of the Warsaw ghetto by pleading with his fellow Jews not to comply with the German order, but he was overruled.[19] In the Vilna ghetto, Lithuania, some ghetto youth groups issued a proclamation on 1 January 1942 stating that the Germans were intending to wipe out the Jews and they needed to resist. Abba Kovner, a 23-year-old poet, called on the people not to report for deportation but he was largely ignored or opposed, e.g. by the Jewish police chief. When the liquidation of the ghetto began some fought and Kovner escaped to the woods.[20]

Unfortunately too often Jews went along with German plans. The development of ghettos or their expansion meant that the removal of their populations was made much easier. The establishment of Jewish Councils, especially in eastern Europe, whose task was to run the ghettos and ease the transporting of residents to the work camps and extermination camps was accepted by most of the Jewish population. The Council members acted from good motives – to protect and preserve Jewish communities – but in practice it greatly eased the work of the murderers. The Councils took on the task of administration in the ghettos and that included policing them and when the Germans demanded that a certain number be gathered for loading onto trains the Jewish police did so. Because of overcrowding in the ghettos living conditions for most became appallingly hard and as the Germans supplied insufficient food people died of starvation and disease. When the chairman of the Warsaw ghetto Council, Adam Czerniakov, realised that he had unwittingly contributed to the

destruction of his people he committed suicide.[21]

It is clear that the route taken by the majority of the Jewish populations of Europe in the face of Nazism, namely non-resistance was a failure. But it was very difficult for the thinly spread population to use violent resistance, although a few guerilla groups did form in eastern Europe but that route could hardly have saved many either. Satyagraha in retrospect looks more promising. Jacques Sémelin in his study of civilian resistance against the Nazis (*Unarmed Against Hitler*) concluded that the best approach for success was for the resistance to be collective, non-violent and open. Satyagraha fits that description.

Gandhi expressed his view of the plight of the Jews in Germany a few months before the outbreak of the war: "But the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. For, he is propounding a new religion of exclusive and militant nationalism in the name of which any inhumanity becomes an act of humanity to be rewarded here and hereafter."[22]

And how to deal with the Nazis: "If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this I should not wait for the Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest were bound to follow my example."[23]

The Nazis were systematic in their attempt to eliminate the Jews and went through stages: identification by compulsory registration > exclusion from the professions > dispossession of property > exclusion from public spaces > marking with the Yellow Star >regrouping into ghettos > setting up Jewish Councils > round-ups > deportation > forced labour > extermination. (Not all stages were necessarily gone through everywhere.).

Gandhi believed that features of satyagraha included truthfulness, courage, respect for one's opponent, not allowing one's self to be humiliated, the actions used should be in keeping with the hoped for aim (ends/means compatibility).

With the advantage of hindsight it can be seen that resistance should have come into operation at the earliest stage, something that would have followed from Gandhi's advice not to accept humiliating treatment. The Nazis cleverly reduced the impact of restrictions by going through many stages each of which the Jews could persuade

themselves would be the last. The Jews should have refused to register in the first place; they should have refused to wear the Yellow Star; they should have refused to be removed from their homes voluntarily and refused to go into the ghettos; they should have refused to serve on the Jewish Councils or to serve in the Jewish police; they should have refused to work for the Germans in factories or construction. If the Jews had shown such courage it would have been much more difficult for the Germans to achieve their aim. Although the individual resister would have put their life at risk, collectively they would have been much stronger. Resistance should have been as public as possible so that everyone could see what was happening, so that the observers' consciences would be challenged by what they saw.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Resistance

Regarding the general population many forms of NVR were available to them as shown above and were actually used but not often enough. They had the strength of superior numbers and could have done much more but it was not a method that was familiar to most people. Total non-cooperation is not a practical solution as the population require access to essentials such as food, water, electricity, health services and therefore selective non-cooperation needs to be used.

NVR that was used by the general population included:

- wearing symbols of resistance
- listening to radio broadcasts and refusing to surrender radios
- writing letters of protest to Nazi officials
- distributing posters and leaflets
- taking part in demonstrations
- producing underground newspapers
- refusing to take Nazi oaths
- refusing to join Nazi organisations

Possibly more powerful than these methods would have been those actions affecting the economy – refusing to be conscripted for work either in the occupied country or in Germany; refusing to export agricultural produce to Germany or its allies; refusal to work in munitions factories. Clearly a severe weakness of the resistance was that these occurred on a very large-scale: for example, Danish farmers exported more food to Germany than was demanded, and over a million workers in Poland (about 30 per cent were Jewish) worked in factories producing war goods.[24] In fact very large numbers of workers in the occupied countries produced for the Germans voluntarily and factory owners were often eager to co-operate with the Germans if it meant a profit.

Other important areas for non-cooperation were the civil service and the judiciary. While some resistance took place cooperation was common. Deciding where to draw the line of cooperation/non-cooperation is not easy but one that is essential. Refusing to carry out specific orders involved risk, sometimes severe risk, but this should be compared with the risk in using violent resistance.

The Future

Research carried out by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan in the last decade comparing non-violent campaigns with violent campaigns throughout the world during the twentieth century has come up with some remarkable results.[25] The authors examined 323 campaigns between 1900 and 2006, one-third of these using non-violent methods and two-thirds using violent methods. These struggles were aimed mainly at removing oppressive indigenous regimes or defeating alien occupation.

The principal finding is that non-violent campaigns are twice as often successful as those using violence. The main reason for this success, the authors believe, is that non-violent campaigns attract more participants. They found that the average non-violent campaign had about 200,000 participants in contrast to only 50,000 for the violent campaign. Larger and more diverse participation leads to other effects such as more tactical innovation. Remarkably, non-violent movements were revealed to be as effective against violent-authoritarian regimes as they were against peaceful-democratic regimes. This seems to apply irrespective of geographical location and is also persistent over time. The authors quote a study by Eleanor Marchant and others who found that the success of non-violent campaigns is very little affected by the type of regime, by its level of development, or whether it is a country divided along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines. Although there are non-violent campaigns that fail and violent campaigns that succeed this study reveals a clear statistical superiority for pragmatic non-violent action.[26]

Human society's attachment to war as a response to conflict needs to be replaced by other more rational and humane methods. Most twenty-first century societies have renounced ideas and practices that were once normal: slavery, judicial torture, rule by an elite, the inferiority of women, are some. War needs to follow these. Non-violent action, or ideally satyagraha, provides some of the answer. To reduce the likelihood of war we require in addition much more equal societies, tolerant non-dogmatic ideologies, and general disarmament – none of which are beyond the means of humankind.

Gandhi wrote in 1938: "If ever there could be a justifiable war in

the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war." [27]

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Introducing Formal Moral Education in Indian Schools: Gandhian Ashram Observances for Inculcating National Character

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ABSTRACT

Right from ancient times, moral education has been a part of academics, the essence of which has been emphatically secular and veritably bereft of any religious bearings. In the twentieth century, too many countries adopted moral education in their school curriculum, accepting it as part of the State duty. Singapore, a former British Asian colony adopted moral education as a formal subject in its school system in 1992 and has been successfully running the programme and topping world rankings in Human Development Index and corruption free countries. The National Curriculum Framework implemented in India since 1975 and continuing till date as NCF 2005 has been incessantly stressing on peace and sensitivity towards others as one of its basic objectives, but has refrained from introducing formal moral education in school curriculum. The result has been a steady rise in corruption, coercion, conflict and communalization even after almost seventy years of independence. The paper attempts to suggest adoption of moral education as a formal discipline in school curricula in order to instil and strengthen the moral fabric of Indian national character. However, this moral education needs to be secular in nature because India is a multi-religious society, thus zeroing on Gandhian Values as the core content for the subject appears the most plausible solution due to the secular and universal nature of his principles. Formal adoption of Gandhian Ashram Observances, envisaged for the inmates of his Sabarmati Ashram, in school curriculum would not only open up the portals of an indigenously comprehensive yet universally adaptable 'way of life' for the X-Generation Indians, but give boost to the flagrantly flagging ideals of truth, honesty, ahimsa, secularism,

simplicity, health and hygiene in the twenty-first century India.

Key words: Need, Moral Education, Schools,Gandhian Values, National Character

Historical Context of Moral Education

'PROTAGORAS'[1] COMPOSED BY Plato in ancient Greece describes a debate between Socrates and Protagoras over the teaching of virtue or 'arete,' a term meaning moral goodness and human greatness. Protagoras believed that virtue could be taught, while Socrates negated the possibility, yet at the same time declaring all virtue as basically 'knowledge,' thereby covertly creating a possibility for its scholarship in formal education. Socrates was a renowned philosopher and teacher of classical Greece while Protagoras was a member of the 'Sophists' commonly called the 'moral entrepreneurs' roaming around the ancient world in the fifth and fourth century BC attempting to establish educational practices. Similarly, Confucius in early China (sixth century BC) compiled a set of rules for conduct based on moral principles to be inducted in everyday life leading to the establishment of a disciplined and stable society. His 'Analects of Confucius'[2] openly declares that virtues are not acquired innately but developed through teaching and training, 'By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.'[3] Confucius' moral education aimed at nurturing a superior being 'Junzi' characterized by superiority of mind, virtues, ideals and morals. To cultivate such a noble entity, a formal instruction in sincerity, benevolence, filial piety, righteousness, integrity, forgiveness and courage needs to be imparted, resulting in the inculcation of benevolence, the paramount virtue termed 'Ren' by Confucius. Benevolence is expressed through behaviour called 'etiquette' or 'Li' in Confucian Philosophy; person with 'Li' would be modest, gentle, elegant, respectful and virtuous, befitting to carve a welfare society. Thus, 'Ren' and 'Li' form the core of Confucian moral education.

Closer home, Emperor Ashoka (304BC-232BC) of the Mauryan Dynasty attempted the same when he elucidated a code of moral conduct christened 'Dhamma'emphasizing harmony especially in unequal relationships like parents and children, kinsmen and friends, teachers and pupils, employers and employees, besides propagating general values viz., non-injury to animals and humans, forgiveness, piety and adhering to the truth. Ashoka's Dhamma was essentially a code of ethical behaviour having parallels with Buddhism, but never

equated publically by its perpetrator. In fact, the Greek and Aramic inscriptions use 'eusebeia' for 'Dhamma' meaning 'virtue' in Greek.[4] Dhamma for Ashoka was 'good' in accordance with the established customs. It never meant religion but "what it behoves a man of right feeling to do"[5] and different from both ritual and theology. Thus, it was a universal code based on social ethics and accommodation of diverse views. Centuries ago Ashoka understood the need for inculcating moral values in his subjects and accordingly not only composed certain 'do's and don'ts' for the moral augmentation of his people but made serious efforts to propagate it. 'Dhamma' was inscribed in 'Prakrit' or the vernacular language, on rock and pillar edicts installed across the length and breadth of the empire and placed at such places where they could be read and imbibed by people from all walks of life. Furthermore, the emperor created a separate administrative department for the purpose and appointed special officers designated 'Dhammamahamatts' with the exclusive duty of spreading and popularizing the precepts of 'Dhamma' amidst the common people. The steps may appear intruding to the modern concept of democratic liberty and bordering over to 'moral policing' but both the objective and methodology adopted by Ashoka were suggestive in nature and lack evidence of any coercion. However, propagation of 'Dhamma' was officially accepted as a State duty and part of public welfare.

Nature, Scope and Attributes of Moral Education

The above deliberations were proof to the fact that the nature, scope and attributes of moral education have been the subject of debate and discussion ever since man first cradled in the throes of civilization. The process continued in the modern period as well eliciting varied ways of defining and characterizing what constituted 'Moral Education.' For Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), "Moral training must form a part of education. Child's disposition must be so trained that he shall choose none but good ends-children should learn from their youth to detest vice; not merely on the ground that God has forbidden it, but because vice is detestable in itself."[6] Similarly, for John Dewey (1859-1952), the purpose of education "is to see that the greatest possible number of ideas acquired by children and youth are acquired in such a way that they become moving ideas, motive forces in the guidance of conduct;" this responsibility "makes the moral purpose universal and dominant in all instruction—whatever the topic."[7] Coming to a more credulous elucidation, Barry Sugarman (1973) defines the morally educated person as

> someone who has concern for other people such that their feelings, wants and interests count with one another and are not overridden for the sake of one's own goals....the morally educated person, when thinking about what to do in an unfamiliar situation or in passing judgment on action al taken, thinks in terms of universalistic moral principles based on concern for the rights of other people as well as himself.[8]

Thus, to quote Horace from *Epistles1.1,*"to flee vice is the beginning of virtue, and the beginning of wisdom is to have got rid of folly" however, the most obvious problem with morality is that there is no consensus among people about what behaviour is ethically acceptable and what is not. One culture finds stoning adulterers to death morally shocking, others find it morally incumbent, similarly within a family circle some may approve abortion while others may not, thereby complicating the possibility of reaching a consensus. In Indian context, some ethnic groups practicing same religion prohibit marriage within the village community, while others consider marrying one's niece as a moral obligation. This brings us to the need for evolving certain ground rules regarding desirable values shared by all, pertaining to one's nationality and culture — in simple words, common values with which all members of a heterogeneous society could identify with and agree to. An ideal sum up would be to quote William K Frankena (1970) who regards morality as

> Standards or guidelines that govern human cooperation-in particular how rights, duties and benefits are to be allocated. Given that people live together and that their activities affect each other, morality provides guidelines and rationales for how each person's activities should affect the other's welfare. The guidelines are not fashioned to serve any one person's interest but are constructed with consideration for each individual's intrinsic values....morality at least in principle deals with sharable values because moralities are proposals for a system of mutual coordination of activities and cooperation among people.[9]

An Overviewof Formal Moral Education in Singapore School Curriculum

Many countries throughout the world adopted formal moral education in their school curriculum with the intention of inculcating certain shared values amongst its citizens aimed at their own welfare as well as the country at large. Singapore, did the same, and has been taken as a source of reference in the paper to emphasize the need of formal moral education in school curriculum. Singapore attained freedom from colonial rule in 1965 and burgeoned on the path of unprecedented

growth and development. Since then it has never looked back and excelled in its socio-economic set up against many Asian giants. Its leaders had a clear vision before them when they set sail to this unchartered territory. In order to have a developed and globally vibrant Singapore, its citizens had to be morally upright with a clear understanding between dos and don'ts. Dr. Goh Keng Swee, who served as the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore (1980-84) and the man responsible for ushering in formal moral education, though in religious form, in Singapore Schools, unequivocally declared, "Without morality and a sense of public duty that does not put self always first, Singapore could decline."[10] In Singapore the privately owned Christian missionary schools had already been imparting Christian moral values to its students. Inspired by them, as well as believing that religion helps inculcate morality, the Government of Singapore in 1982 declared religious knowledge as a compulsory subject in school curriculum. The students could choose from Bible Studies, Islamic Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Confucian Ethics, Hindu Studies and Sikh Studies. However, the implementation of this 'mixed bag' created rift in the religious and racial harmony of Singapore. Therefore, in 1992 religious education was replaced by Civic and Moral Education. The CME[11] focussed on developing the moral well-being of the pupils by 'helping them acquire and live by the values that guide them to make appropriate choices and determine their behaviour and attitude towards themselves, others and environment, so that the child develops into a morally upright, caring and responsible individual and citizen.' The CME syllabus focussed on six core values — Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Care, Resilience and Harmony, to be inculcated at both the primary and secondary levels. These core values represented the tenets that constituted shared national identity aimed at inculcating Singapore's National Character. Different teaching approaches were to be adopted for nurturing the selected values, ranging from Cognitive Development to Action learning, among others. Community Involvement Program consisting of six hours per academic year developed 'volunteerism.' The medium of instruction was to be the mother tongue, that is, Malay, Chinese or Tamil as these three constitute the leading ethnic groups in Singapore. Assessment was Formative — continuous and on day-to-day basis 'providing enough opportunities to involve and guide pupils in the discussion of complex and challenging issues.' At the secondary level, the stress was on strengthening what has been done at the primary level. The ultimate objective is to take the students at a higher 'self' guided by moral knowing, moral feeling and finally the apex of human existence — moral action. The Civic and Moral Education resulted in placing

Singapore among the top ten countries of the world in UNDP's Human Development Index. As per HDI 2014[12] world rankings Singapore was at the ninth position, and the only Asian country to make it to the top ten. HDI evaluation is based on the educational, health and income levels of the member countries. The Corruption Perceptive Index 2015 prepared by Transparency International[13] and quoted by World Democracy Audit 2015[14] assessed Singapore as the eighth least corrupt country scoring 85, only six mark less than Denmark which came first, while the Economists Safe Index 2015[15] declared Singapore as the second safest city in the world. In 2014, Ministry of Education in Singapore brought a new framework in the Moral Education syllabus and replaced the Civic and Moral Education with Character and Citizenship Education.[16] It continues to exist as an independent subject placing the six core values at the centre while enveloping them in concentric circles pertaining to Social and Emotional Competencies and further with skills related to Citizenship Competencies. The CCE hopes to inculcate civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills among the students befitting them for the needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. However, the new framework has reduced the gamut of formal moral education, serving it not in a distinct platter but synthesizing it with other skills like cyber wellness, communication skills, globalization, career guidance, sex education etc., while making parents key partners in the new set up. There have been voices both in favour and against the change, the result of which is too early to decipher.

Need for Formal Moral Education in India

After an overview of the need, structure and benefits of formal moral education in Singapore a critical appraisal of the same in Indian scenario becomes evident. India, like Singapore had been a British Colony and suffered the same setbacks and exploitation. However, it did attain independence much early than Singapore thereby, becoming master of its destiny in 1947 itself.Keeping aside the disparity in size and population, many would term Indian democracy much stronger and liberal than Singapore. As per the Freedom House Annual Survey[17] of 150 countries and quoted in World Audit, India's Democracy Ranking in 2014 is fifty-one while that of Singapore is seventy-three. In spite of the lead in experience and civil liberties, even after sixty-nine years of independence, India is ranked one hundred and thirty-five by Human Development Index 2014, twentieth most violent place in the world and ranked one hundred and forty-three out of one hundred and sixty-two countries by Global Peace Index 2015[18] and assigned seventy-sixth positionfor the year 2015 in the corruption rankings by

Transparency International.[19] Besides, crime against Women, Children, Dalits, Tribals, People with Disability, Minorities (Religious and Linguistic) are on the rise. In spite of possessing world's most brilliant and comprehensive Constitution, the State in India has failed to deliver the goods. This brings us to the next important issue. Is it the sole responsibility of the State to bring on the change? The answer lies in the following words of Kant, "By whom, is the better condition of the world to be brought about? By rulers, or by their subjects, it is by the latter who shall so improve themselves that they meet half way the measures for their good which the government might establish."[20]And how does one improve oneself, by imbibing the best inherent in education? And who decides the constituents of education, the State itself, as per the need of its subjects? In Indian context that need has been primarily literacy, which is still beyong the reach of sizeable parts of the population. This insistence on literacy has made our policy makers forego the need and importance of formal moral education. They failed to comprehend its value, especially for the first generation learners who had no avenue to absorb the 'moralistic' ideas. Their families toiling hard to meet two square meals a day could not be expected to harness the 'inherent good' in them. Similarly, the rising, new and ambitious Indian middle class, busy churning their lives to make 'more money' too lack the requisite time and patience to sit and instil moral values amongst their children. Religion as such has been a moral failure in India registering its presence only in terms of riots born of suspicion and ill-will between different communities. The 'moral' in religion is shrouded in greed for power and money, thereby, leaving the majority wobbling like lost sheep. In such a dismal scenario it is the duty of the State to impart moral education through school curriculum.

Indian educationists right from S. Radhakrishnan to Sri Prakasa Committee (Committee on Religious and Moral Instructions) 1959, emphasized the importance of imparting moral education oriented towards the unity and integration of the pluralistic nature of Indian nation, however, it was the Indian Education Commission (Kothari Commission) 1964-66, that suggested direct moral instruction in the school programme. In Volume 2 Chapter VIII '*Education Social, Moral and Spiritual Values'* 8.96 the members recommended: "that one or two periods a week should be set aside in the school time table for instruction in moral and spiritual values."In spite of the lucid advice, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), that carries the onus of publishing National Curriculum Framework, which includes preparing the syllabi, textbooks and teaching practices within school education programmes in India, and having given the

country its four NCFs, that is, 1975, 1988, 2000 and the currently implemented 2005, still refrains from adopting a formal moral education programme. Though, the details of the document available for public perusal at the NCERT official website lucidly state: 'sensitivity to others well-being and feelings' as one of the broad aims of education and in the main features of the curriculum, one of the national concerns mentioned is 'concerns and issues pertaining to environment, peace oriented values and sensitivity towards gender parity and towards SC, STs and minorities' but rejects a separate imparting of these values. Thus, NCF 2005 stresses on moral values, not as an exclusive subject, but as an intrinsic part of each subject, to be amalgamated with the basic characteristics of the discipline, for example, secularism in History and investigative temper, curiosity and concern for life and environment with science. Such kind of arrangement already existed in Singapore still it felt the need to introduce formal moral education as a separate subject in the school curriculum. The Civic and Moral Education running in schools since 1992 has already nurtured a complete generation of citizens raised on formal moral education catering to the Singaporean National Character and consistently contributing to the leaps and bounds the country has achieved in all walks of life. Whereas in Indian context we are still fumbling with issues of corruption, coercion, conflict and communalisation arising from dearth of food, water, medicines, electricity, employment, literacy and basic infrastructure. It is not that Indian schools are completely bereft of any moral education, nearly all of the Christian missionary schools and many other privately owned schools do teach 'moral education' as a subject, but it is not part of formal assessment and, therefore, treated as an appendix by the teachers as well as students. Again the share of private schools as compared to government and local body schools both at the primary and secondary level is quite less. As per the data made public by Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India 2011-12,[21] 85.1 per cent schools are under government set up at primary level, whereas at upper primary level the share is at 70.5 per cent, reconfirming the need to reform the NCF and induct formal moral education in school curricula. It is then only that the first principle envisaged in our National Policy on Education (1986 and modified in 1992) would be fulfilled, "Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenge of time."[22]

Gandhian Framework for Moral Education for Inculcating Indian National Character

Before venturing on the course for framing the basic structure for

formal moral education in India, primarily designed from Gandhian values, it is essential to recount Gandhi's own views on moral education and ethics. Gandhi was essentially a man of religion and thereby associated morality as a means to realize God. God for him represented the moral force in every aspect of human life. In fact, in his early writings on education, he declared ethics and religion to be at par, and to be made an integral part of Indian system of education. In *Hind Swaraj* (1908), on being questioned on the content of education ideally suited to the Indian context, he emphatically declared, "Religious that is ethical education will occupy the first place," because he knew India will never be godless and atheism can never flourish in this land. For Gandhi, all religions were same, different paths to the same God and professing common human values; therefore, he had accordingly included religious education as part of his Ashram curriculum evolved and practiced in South Africa (Phoenix and Tolstoy), as well as India (Kochrab and Sabarmati). Moreover, in '*Ashram Observances in Action*' compiled by Valji Govindji Desai in 1955 and based on Gandhi's letters to Sabarmati inmates between the years 1930-32, he overtly stated, "Religious education is indispensable and the child should get it by watching the teacher's conduct and by hearing him talk about it."[23] Interestingly, a few years earlier he had even suggested a curriculum for religious instruction including "a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own."[24] This would inculcate appreciation and respect for religions other than their own in the minds and souls of the students and spread religious harmony in a multi-religious country like India. However, with time his views changed, which was a common occurrence with this researcher of truth. All his anthologized writings contain a declaration that he made in *Harijan* 29-4-33 addressed to his readers. "In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, and therefore, when anybody finds inconsistency between any two writings of mine, he would do well to choose the latter of the two on the same subject."Accordingly, his fundamentals of Basic Education, compiled in 1937 targeting children between the age group seven to fourteen and published in *Harijan* 2-11-47, he emphatically rejected the scope for religious education, "In this, there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics will have full scope." Continuing the same strain in *Harijan* 23-3-47, he wrote, "I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education ….Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State." In later years Gandhi

had stopped equating religion with ethics and had advised the State to stay away from religious education, yet at the same time declaring ethical education as its moral duty. Possibly, the rise of communalism in the later phase of the Indian National Movement characterized by the rise of sectarian political parties and bodies in both the Hindu and Muslim communities had forced him to make this transition. Without doubt, he was a visionary, a man much ahead of his times and had read the writing on the wall that envisaged the need for secular moral education in India.

While attempting a moral framework for Indian schools a brief justification for selecting Gandhi as its basis is imperative. India is a cradle of numerous religions, languages, customs and rituals. Every village has its own good and a blurred code of what is permissible and what is not ranging from food, clothing, marriage and occupation. In such a scenario, agreeing to a moral code shared by all entities aiming at cultivating a national character, becomes an onerous task. At such a juncture, Gandhian values veritably come to our rescue, his ideals and principles are such to which every Indian irrespective of caste, class, gender, religion and ethnicity can identify with. Though, post-independence, we have not only turned our back to Gandhian ideals and principles but sadistically relished dissecting his personal fallacies in books as well as our drawing rooms, still, in the deep recesses of our minds and souls, we do know that his words and morals represent a timeless efficacy that is unchallengeable. Even after seven decades of his death, he still represents the zenith of Indian polity, society, economy and spirituality, reflecting both, the indigenous as well as universal, idealistic as well as pragmatic, thereby, making our choice of Gandhi for the subject a rationale one.

Our primary concern in compiling a Gandhian framework is zeroing on certain common moral precepts that would assist the students in enriching the moral fabric of their everyday life, as well rearing them into responsible citizens. The Ashram Observances envisaged by Gandhi, originally penned down in Gujarati and later translated in English by Valji Govindji Desai under the title '*From Yervada Mandir*' and published in 1932, appear the most appropriate choice for moral values to be adopted in Indian school system in the present day scenario. The following observances may be embraced.[25]

1. Truth – For Gandhi '*Satya*' is God and the sole purpose of this otherwise futile life. 'Truth is God and God is Truth.' Truth for Gandhi has a comprehensive meaning. Truth is to be practiced in thought, word and deed. It involves '*tapas*' self-suffering, bordering on death. In practice of Truth there is no place for cowardice, it is a perpetual

process that seeps into every aspect of human life, whether it is, working, drinking, eating or playing. Sadly, lying, cheating and bribery has become an intrinsic part of everyday life in India. As per a study titled 'Bribery and Corruption: Ground Reality in India' conducted by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Ernst and Young,[26] India lost Rs 36,400 Crore (USD 5.92 billion) between October 2011 and September 2012 due to major scams, including the Commonwealth Games Scandal. Therein lays an urgent need to rectify the situation and no better ideal than the man whose candid confessions on theft to adultery continue to confound the sceptics.

2. Non-violence and Love – *Ahimsa* is the means to reach the 'Truth.' Love is the material expression of *'Ahimsa'* and often used in concert with the latter. Love and Truth are the faces of the same coin. A person cannot be true if he does not love all God's creation. Love transcends all animal instincts and is never biased. It is boundless like an ocean. Like Truth, *Ahimsa* too has a wider expression. It is hurt by evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs. Incidentally, Amnesty International Annual Report 2015-16 on India quotes over 47,000 crimes against members of Scheduled Castes and more than 11,000 crimes against Scheduled Tribes in the year 2014.[27] Of late, violence has become too common and rampant in India. Neighbourly squabbles to 'road rage' have become the order of the day. Patience is taken as cowardliness, being soft is something to be shunned and aggression to be adopted not only as part of personality but even in national matters. It is time to revert to the age old Indian tradition of *'Ahimsa'* and Peace propagated most voraciously by Gandhi and inculcate in the heart and soul of India's future citizens.

3. Brahmacharya or Chastity – This too like other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed. It would be foolish to control the body but nurture evil thoughts. It includes control of all organs not just the lust. By giving in to lust a lot of vital energy is lost which if channelized in right direction could yield tremendous results. India's National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB) reported rise in the incidents of rape of children below 18 years in the country since 2012. According to NCRB data, there were a total of 8,541 cases of such nature registered in 2012, 12,363 in 2013, 13,766 in 2014 and 10,364 in 2015.[28] Parenthetically, these are the reported cases, whereas in a closed society like India, many ground reported cases are hushed within the quarters of family and community. Gandhi's insistence on 'Brahmacharya' may appear impractical and even ridiculous to many but even a partial adoption of this observance may prove Herculean

in nurturing respect, dignity and compassion towards women and children in the characteristic traits of the young generation.

4. Control of the Palate – Observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate. Food has to be taken only in quantities limited to the needs of the body and to keep it going. True happiness is impossible without true health and true health is impossible without a rigid control of the palate. In a country like India, where many sleep with empty bellies every night, controlling the palate would certainly serve to cut down the cost and spare more food for the impoverished. As per Food and Agriculture Organization, an agency of the United Nations, India, between the years 2014-16 had 15.2 per cent of its population undernourished, bringing the total number to 194.6 million.[29] Similarly, according to a report published in *Times of India*, dated January15, 2012,[30] in spite of claiming to be burgeoning towards the status of a superpower, India still has nearly 44 per cent of its under five children underweight and 7 per cent die before they reach five years. Mushrooming of expensive fast-food joints and the foul smell and sight of wasting food at wedding reception grounds in modern day India, is a dire reminder of the gluttony right from childhood necessitating the habit of controlling the palate, not only for the welfare of one's own body, but fellow countrymen at large.

5. Non-Stealing – Every one of us is consciously or unconsciously guilty of theft. It is thievery not only to take things belonging to others, but also if we take something believing it nobody's property. Things found on the roadside belong to the ruler or the local authority. Observance of non-stealing goes much farther. It is theft to take something if we have no real need of it. We multiply our wants and make thieves of ourselves. Bothering about things to be acquired in future also amounts to thievery. As stated before, Corruption Perceptive Index 2015 ranked India at 76/168 countries with a score of 38/100. Previously, Global Corruption Barometer 2013 reported corruption and bribery as part of every private and public institution in India, ranging from political parties to media, judiciary, police and even education.[31]

6. Non-Possession or Poverty – Desire to possess has given rise to inequalities and miseries. The rich have things they do not need and are neglected and wasted, while millions starve to death. If each retained what was truly required, contentment would prevail. Civilization consists not in the multiplication but in deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. Interestingly, post-liberalization middle-class India frolicking in luxurious cravings and desire, is in dire need of this particular value. A KPMG-Assocham Study says the Indian

luxury market grew at a brisk 30 per cent in 2012 and will stand at 14 Billion USD by 2016. The luxury goods sector includes products like apparel, accessories, home decor, pens, watches, wines and spirits and jewellery, and services such as fine dining, concierge services, travel, hotels, spa-assets as fine arts, yachts and automobiles.[32] In a land where millions continue to live below poverty line, the urge to soak in extravagance needs to be reigned in and the spartan lifestyle which India seem to have lost somewhere in the frenzy of globalization, is to be reared back through school education system.

7. Fearlessness – Fearlessness is indispensable for the growth of other noble qualities, because Truth and Love cannot be practiced without fearlessness. One must be free of fear; fear of disease, bodily injury, death, dispossession, reputation and so on, in order to pursue Truth. For a votary of *Ahimsa,* fearlessness doesn't amount to the usage of weapon but steadfastness to truth and non-violence. As discussed earlier, what is required is an inherent courage to be sowed from the early school years, a courage that is both confident and compassionate, surviving boldly without the crutch of any weapon, raising its voice against any injustice, remaining firm, irrespective of the perpetrator and consorting only with the lucid unadulterated truth.

8. Removal of Untouchability – Untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth. Generally, this is pertaining to the low castes in India, but it does spill over into religion and community, and hence its removal would break down barriers between men. Till date, a big chunk of Dalits in India are into manual scavenging and treated as pariah by many. National Council for Applied Economic Research, New Delhi and University of Maryland conducted a survey covering 42,000 households across India in 2014 and reported untouchability in the sense of not allowing a low caste to enter their kitchen or touch their dishes exist among 30 per cent of Hindus, with Brahmins amounting to 52 per cent engaged in such practices.[33] This proves the need for implanting this value in the tender psyches so that from the initial stage itself they let go of this inhuman practice, fraternize with the Dalits, redress their grievances and love them as their own selves.

9. Bread Labour – To live, man must work. Even if his occupation is intellectual in nature, he must indulge in physical labour pertaining to his daily chores. If all laboured for their bread, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. This would also replace dignity in labour that seems to be lost to the human civilization in the age of machines and technology, besides providing a healthy source of physical exercise to our otherwise sedate lifestyle. According to a study published in the noted journal *Lancet*, in a country where 270

million still live below poverty line, junk food, alcohol and sedentary lifestyle is making one out of every man and woman of India obese and overweight.[34] Thus, as per the report, India is home to 15 per cent of world's obese people because of pursuing an internet and technology-laced lazy and stagnant lifestyle. A life given to physical labour was respected and espoused by Gandhi even for those indulging in scholarly pursuits and it is the same that should be lodged in the school curriculum for moral education.

10. Communal Unity – We need not tolerate each other's faith because the term has a derogatory connotation but entertain the same respect and regard for the religion of others as we accord to our own. We must be also aware of the weaknesses of our own faith and look at all with an equal eye. True knowledge of religion frees us from fanaticism and transcends us to spiritual insight. Communal violence is on the rise and alarming to the secular fabric of the country. According to records with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, there have been 630 communal incidents till October 2015, with the public lynching of a Muslim man in Dadri near the nation's capital in September, under suspicion of having consumed beef, being the most overt representation of the depth of religious polarization the country has reached.[35] Schools need to come to the forefront equipped with moral education curricula to exterminate the vermin of communal prejudice and stereotypes rooted in the nucleus of the young minds by their very own family and friends and nurture respect and understanding towards each others' faith.

11. Swadeshi – Here the implication of *swadeshi* goes much beyond the economical. A votary of *swadeshi* would, in his utmost ability, dedicate first to the well-being of his family, neighbourhood, community and country at large, but all within the gamut of morality and not causing harm to anyone. On the economic front, he would give preference to the local manufacturers, even if they are of an inferior grade, but would not turn the practice into a fetish, rejecting the foreign product, even when one's country is not capable of producing it. '*Swadeshism*' is not a cult of hatred but a doctrine of selfless service. Recently, many attempts are being made by the Government of India to promote *swadeshi* products in the country especially 'Khadi' the indigenously spun homemade cloth and product of the Gandhian *charkha*. It has been announced that the crew members of Air India — official aircraft of the Indian President and Prime Minister, would be wearing Khadi uniforms[36] and it may become mandatory for government employees to wear Khadi on atleast one day of the week. Such attempts may usher in the change in attitude but perennial transition would come only when the youngsters

understand the socio-economical essence of such indigenous products right from school days.

The above may not be an exhaustive or a perfect list of core values to be inculcated amongst school students to foster national character and meet the demands of the twenty-first century India, yet it comes quite close to lessening the banes of India that have been plaguing it for centuries and hindering its march to growth and development. The values need to be introduced in a basic form at the primary level by adopting an Action Approach, a Narrative Approach (role play and stories) or a Consideration Approach based on empathy, and taking the students to higher stage of moral development, focussing on social and universal perspective, with the same core values, at the secondary level. As discussed earlier, Singapore model between the years 1992 to 2014 could be adopted. Medium of instruction should be the first language, which would definitely differ across the length and breadth of India. For the English medium students, a switch to English in moral education should be made only at the secondary level. Formative Assessment as part of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation should be adopted so that the subject may not be neglected at any cost. Since it would be made part of the formal syllabi and textbooks prepared by the NCERT, its implementation should be mandatory with sanctions for non-compliance.

Conclusion

The arguments and suggestions given in the paper may appear utopian to many, but then, dreaming and aspiring for a better world is basic to human nature. What would life be without dreams and hope? Gigantic feats are achieved by the lethal combination of dream and work. Presently, India is at an impasse, at one end are the modish amenities of a lifestyle driven by desire. Business tycoons from rags to riches storyline are the role models for the youngsters exposed to both the best and worst of the modern world. Mobiles and Levis have reached rural India. India is one of the leading consumers of petrol globally. On the other side, farmers are still committing suicides because of debt trap, landless labourers are selling their children into human trafficking, Dalit grooms are not allowed to sit on horseback, child marriage, Devdasi System, Dowry and rape continue to make headlines. Roads are still splurged with potholes, and drains, either overflow or get clogged. Government formulates plans for development, but they get stuck at the implementation level. It is as if there are two India's, unfortunately, neither of it is true. In such a dismal scenario a serious review of the root cause and possible solution becomes necessary. The problem may not always lie with 'others' but

with one's own 'self.' The corrupt politician or 'babu' is not a separate entity having born and raised in a distinct social environment, but one of us only. It is high time that we indulge in self-introspection and initiate a system of formal moral education in Indian schools and propagate and promote Gandhian values for inculcating the true national character.

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Notes & Comments

Mohandas K. Gandhi and Ton Regan: Advocates for Animal Rights

Dr Rainer Ebert

IN THE EARLY 1970s,a young philosopher by the name of Tom Regan, horrified by the tragic loss of innocent human lives in the then ongoing Vietnam War, went to the university library and buried himself in books on war, violence, and human rights, determined to prove that the American involvement in the war was morally wrong. One day, he picked up Mohandas K. Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.[1] Reading it with great care and interest, he surely came across the following passage:

To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man.[2]

Little did he know that this literary encounter with Gandhi would change his life forever and have a lasting and profound impact on the history of moral philosophy. He asked himself: "How can I oppose the unjustified killing of human beings in Vietnam and at the same time fill my freezer with the dead body parts of innocent animals?"[3] Shortly thereafter, in 1975, he published his first article on the moral status of non-human animals. As its title, he chose *The Moral Basis of*

Vegetarianism,[4] the same title as that of a1959 collection of writings by Gandhi.[5]He argued that vegetarianism and, more generally, the idea of animal rights are not the products of excessive sentimentality they are often perceived to be, but rather"have a rational foundation."[6] In the decades that followed, he further developed and defended that argument in more than twenty books, hundreds of articles, and countless public lectures across the globe, and he became one of the philosophical leaders of the animal rights movement. In a telling reminder that the power of ideas knows no national or cultural boundaries, he wrote later in his life: "I think it is fair to say that I would never have become an animal rights advocate if I had not read […] [Gandhi's] autobiography."[7] Earlier this year, on February 17, Regan passed away. He died of pneumonia at his home in Raleigh, North Carolina, at the age of 78.[8]

Regan's most notable book, *The Case for Animal Rights*, was first published in 1983, and has since beentranslated into several languages.[9] It contains the most comprehensive account of his theory of animal rights and played a crucial role in establishing the intellectual respectability of the animal rights movement.With more than 400 pages of dense philosophical reasoning, it is not an easy book to read, but the basic argument is easy enough to understand.

If all human beings have equal moral rights,[10] as virtually everybody agrees they do, these rightsmust be based on a relevant similarity between them.[11]That similarity cannot be, as is often uncritically assumed, the fact that all human beings are members of the species *Homo sapiens*, as it would be no less arbitrary to base rights on species membership than onbeing of a certain race or gender. We consider it wrong and call it sexism to deny the protections afforded by rights to women just because they are women, and we call it racism when race is used to justify treating members of racial minority groups with less respect or less consideration for their interests. Analogously, wrongful discrimination based on species membership has come to be known as *speciesism*,[12] a term originally coined by British psychologist Richard D. Ryder and popularized by Australian philosopher Peter Singer.[13]Our biological humanity carries no intrinsic moral significance and is hence ill-suited to serve as a basis on which rights can plausibly be ascribed.

Rationality, the ability to use language, and moral agency, features we like to think make us special among the animals, are not plausible candidates either. After all, there are some of us, such as young children and people with certain severe cognitive impairments, who are incapable of rational thought, language-use, and moral agency, and yet that does not undermine the validity of their claim to respectful

treatment.

The relevant similarity between human beings, Regan argues, is that we are all experiencing subjects of a life. We are not merely alive – each one of us*has a life* that makeshim or her unique. The same, however, is also true of many non-human animals, which Regan explained with his characteristic eloquenceat the Royal Institution of Great Britain in 1989, with an estimated audience of one million people watching the BBC live broadcast:

> The other animals humans eat, use in science, hunt, trap, and exploit in a variety of other ways have a life of their own that is of importance to them, apart from their utility to us. They are not only in the world, they are aware of it and also of what happens to them. And what happens to them matters to them. Each has a life that fares experientially better or worse for the one whose life it is. Like us, they bring a unified psychological presence to the world. Like us, they are somebodies, not somethings. In these fundamental ways, the non-human animals in labs and on farms, for example, are the same as human beings.[14]

We must hence accept, on pain of inconsistency, that these animals,too, have moral rights, including the right not to be killed or made to suffer. The practical implications of this vieware nothing short of radical and include, most importantly, the total abolition of the use of animals as experimental subjects and as sources of food, clothing, and entertainment; and this then was the basis of Regan's vegetarianism.[15]

For Gandhi, vegetarianism initially was not so much a matter of morality as of mere custom.He grew up in a family firmly rooted in the Vaishnava tradition of vegetarianism. Eating meat was frowned upon, and he never gave it much thought – until he made a new friend in high school. The friend's name was Mehtab and he was a classmate of his elder brother. Mehtab told Gandhi that many of their teachers were secretly eating meat, and offered the following explanation, which reflects the dominant British colonial discourse around diet at the time:

> We are weak people because we do not eat meat. The English are able to rule over us, because they are meat-eaters. […] Meat-eaters do not have boils or tumors, and even if they sometimes happen to have any, these heal quickly. Our teachers and other distinguished people who eat meat are no fools. They know its virtues. You should do likewise. There is nothing like trying. Try, and see what strength it gives.[16]

The friend's persistent demand eventually had the desired effect

on the young Gandhi. Long having admired his friend's physical strength, Gandhi started experimenting with eating meat. This episode in his life, however, was not to last for long. The guilt of deceiving his parents soon became unbearable, and he went back to a vegetarian diet, even though he remained convinced of the importance of eating meat to the advancement of Indians.

That conviction changed during Gandhi's time as a law student in England, where he was introduced to the vegetarian literature of the time, particularly the work of Henry Stephens Salt. It was only then that he became "a vegetarian by choice"[17] and made the promotion of vegetarianism part of his life's mission. He joined the London Vegetarian Society in 1891, and started writing for its weekly journal, *The Vegetarian*, a year later. In his articles for *The Vegetarian*, he confronts the colonial misconception that vegetarianism is inferior to diets that include meat, arguing that "vegetarianism is not only not injurious, but on the contrary is conducive to bodily strength."[18] By way of example, he points to the Indian shepherd, a vegetarian and yet "a finely built man of Herculean constitution."[19] The nutritional adequacy and potential health benefits of vegetarian diets have since been repeatedly confirmed by modern science. The American Dietetic Association, for example, notes that:

> appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and for athletes.[20]

Concern for human health, however, was only one of multiple dimensions of Gandhi's vegetarianism. His opposition to meat-eating was also spiritual, political, and – maybe most importantly – ethical.[21] In a letter to *The Natal Mercury*in 1896, Gandhi, now a barrister in South Africa, approvingly summarizes the position of the "vegetarian moralists" as affirming that,

> since meat eating is not only unnecessary but harmful to the system, indulgence in it is immoral and sinful, because it involves the infliction of unnecessary pain to and cruelty towards harmless animals.[22]

Meat-eating here is recognized as a wrongful kind of violence, and rejected on that basis. It should be noted that Gandhi's reference to pain and cruelty might indicate an important difference between his and Regan's moral justification of vegetarianism. For Regan, the

primary wrong-making feature of eating meat is not that it involves the infliction of pain and cruelty, but the lack of respect for the inherent value of non-human animals that we show when we kill them for food. Regan writes that:

> [t]he fundamental moral wrong [of commercial animal agriculture] […] is not that animals are kept in stressful close confinement or in isolation, or that their pain and suffering, their needs and preferences are ignored or discounted. All these *are* wrong, of course, but they are not the fundamental wrong. They are symptoms and effects of the deeper, systematic wrong that allows these animals to be viewed and treated as lacking independent value, as resources for us – as, indeed, a renewable resource. Giving farm animals more space, more natural environments, more companions does not right the fundamental wrong, any more than giving lab animals more anesthesia or bigger, cleaner cages would right the fundamental wrong in their case. Nothing less than the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture will do this […].[23]

Gandhi's rejection of violence against non-human animals is in line with his general commitment to *ahimsa* ("non-violence") and hence, by extension, his practice of *satyagraha* ("insistence on truth" or "truth-force"), with which *ahimsa* is intimately intertwined. Some authors have even gone so far as to argue that Gandhi's conversion to ethical vegetarianism was the first step in the development of his non-violent philosophy, and served as a motivator for the steps that followed. One such author is Arun M. Sannuti, who writes that:

> Gandhi's choice to become vegetarian started him on the road towards ahimsa, renunciation, and finally, satyagraha itself. Without it, he would have never realized the power of morality and never would have become the Mahatma.[24]

Be that as it may, there is little doubt that, in Gandhi's opposition to meat-eating, moral considerations stemming from his commitment to nonviolence took precedence over all other considerations, as he drastically illustrated in a speech he gave at the London Vegetarian Society on a visit to England in 1931.With Salt by his side, Gandhi urged his audience to promote vegetarianism as a moral rather than a health issue, noting that those who become vegetarians solely out of concern for their own health are those "who largely fall back."[25] About his own reasons for abstaining from meat, he said:

> [T]he basis of my vegetarianism is not physical, but moral. If anybody said that I should die if I did not take beef-tea or mutton, even under medical advice, I would prefer death. That is the basis of my

vegetarianism.[26]

It is hence no surprise that Gandhi also was a staunch opponent of vivisection:

> I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it.[27]

Different though their circumstances and their journeys toward animal advocacy were, Gandhi and Regan shared the vision of a world where non-human animals are not killed or made to suffer for our benefit. Sadly, while some limited progress has been made, such a world, though possible, is still a distant dream.[28]

More than two thousand animals – not including fish and other marine animals – are killed to produce food for human consumption per second.[29]As global population and affluence continue to rise, so does that number. Even in India, the country with by far the largest vegetarian population,meat consumption has been steadily rising for decades, mainly due to the rapidly increasing consumption of poultry.[30] Gandhi hoped that "there may be born on earth some great spirit, man or woman, fired with divine pity, who will deliver us from this heinous sin […] [and] save the lives of the innocent creatures […]."[31]More likely, it will take a combined effortof a great many people, especially scholars and activists, political, social, and religious leaders, and conscientious consumers, to make the dream of a world where human beings coexist peacefully with other animals a reality. Like Gandhi, Regan did his part. Combining scholarly rigor and dispassionate attention to philosophical detail with the infectious passion of moral conviction, he was as close to the ideal of a moral philosopher as only very few others, and I take comfort in knowing that his words will endure, calling on us to treat animalswith the respect they are due, and continue to inspire generations to come.

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5. Gandhi 1959.
6. Regan 1975, p. 182.
7. Regan 2004b, p. 231.
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9. Regan 1983.
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11. This is an implication of the general principle of justice that requires equals to be treated equally and unequals to be treated unequally.
12. For philosophical arguments against speciesism, see, e.g., Singer 1975, Chapter 2, Cavalieri 2001, Chapter 4, McMahan 2002, Chapter 3, Singer 2009, and Singer 2011, Chapter 3.
13. In a recent interview with *The New York Times*, Peter Singer asked, "If we think that simply being a member of the species *Homo sapiens* justifies us in giving more weight to the interests of members of our own species than we give to members of other species, what are we to say to the racists or sexists who make the same claim on behalf of their race or sex?" (Yancy & Singer 2015.)I am yet to come across a convincing answer.
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New Springs of Solidarity Beyond Fear and Trembling

Ananta Kumar Giri

A prayer which asks for nothing, and receives
nothing? A prayer which
dare not acquire
a sound,
dare not resound
in the house,
dare not become a weeping?

—Rustam Singh (2011), *"Weeping" and other Essays on Being and Writing*, p. 101.

Stressing the interpretant rather than the interpreter, pragmatics underlines the interpretant which does not merely identify the interpreted but rather responds actively and takes a critical stance.
[..] the problem of the relation to other, of dialogue and responsibility towards others, is no less than pivotal in Pierce's own conception of semiotics in the human world, and therefore in the human subject. In fact, an aspect of Pierce's sign theory that should not be underestimated in the contribution he makes towards redefining subjectivity. In so far as it is made of signs, that is, signs becoming, subjectivity emerges as a dialogic and relational open unit.

Susan Petrilli (2010), *Sign Crossroads in Global Perspective: Semioethics and Responsibility*, pp 167, 89.

IT IS WINTER IN America now, a winter of fear and populist bigotry. On the wake of terrorist killings in Paris and San Bernadino, California in November 2015 where shooters came from radical Islamic ideology with affiliation to ISIS, there is a growing Islamophobia in America. But while president Donald Trump is advocating for banning Muslim immigrants from entering the US and for profiling Muslim Americans, President Barack Obama in his address to the Nation said on Dec 6: "We cannot turn this to a war between America and Islam. This reflects a small bud of spring in contemporary American political climate as the media is dominated by Islamophobia. But in many communities new springs of solidarity are blossoming and flowing. On December 13, 2015 there was such a spring of solidarity at Islamic Center in

Antioch, California in which I was so fortunate to take part. The Islamic Center is part of the local mosque here. The mosque was attacked a few years ago and at that many leaders from other religions such as Rev Will McGarvey of Contra Cost County Inter-faith council had come out in solidarity with the Muslims sisters, brothers and children there. McGarvey was there in that afternoon too as one of the main organizers of this meeting of solidarity.

The meeting hall was full of such significant slogans and statements such as "I love America as much as you do." The Imam of the mosque welcomed the assembly: "Muslim bashing is not the solution to the problem of extremism. Fear deprives people of their freedom. We cannot turn this against one another. A majority of terrorist victims are Muslims." He went on to state: "5000 Muslim Americans are serving in the Armed Forces. We are all in the same boat. These are some of our words but words do not speak the heart." McGarvery, the co-organizer of the meet spoke after the Imam had said: "Our solidarity with you is deeper than words. I was here when this mosque was attacked. We are also together with you." From this solidarity emerged inter-faith peace project. Rabbi Pam Frydman is a passionate activist with inter-faith and multi-faith work in the Bay Area. She is a co-walker with Costa County Inter-Faith Council with McGarvey as well as part of the inter-faith council of San Francisco. She is also a member of the local circle of United Religions, a world-wide movement of circles of inter-religious peace and dialogue. Rabbi Pam has also been mobilizing local and global support against the genocide of Yezhidis and Assyrians committed by ISIS and other forces in the Middle East. Pam has been donating all her resources for inter-faith work and fighting against genocide. In her heart-touching words of solidarity Pam spoke in her characteristic voice of compassion and strength: "I am here as a human being and as a mother. I feel the danger of Islamophobia having gone through anti-Semitism. Several members of my family perished in the holocaust. I can see what comes next when you start profiling. Judaism teaches that we should welcome the strangers."

Some of the priests from the local monasteries also affirmed their continued solidarity. After this McGarvey kindly invited me to share some thoughts. I said that so far in our fight against terrorism we have been only focusing on external means, whether war or community solidarity, but we do not much link this to the challenge of transformation of consciousness. Springs of solidarity like this is also an occasion for us to work on transformation of our consciousness which is both immediate and epochal, practical and evolutionary. As we gather together in solidarity we can walk with creative

practitioners of solidarity in human history such as Gandhi. After the partition of India, Gandhi walked in Noakhali to bring peace and security to affected Muslims. Gandhi built up loving solidarity with activists and fighters from other religious traditions such as Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who led the non-violent social movement of Khudai Kismat Gar in the same area now dominated by gun-trotting Talibans. Gaffar Khan cultivated an Islam of peace, love and justice as Maulana Wahiduddin Khan of Center of Peace and Spirituality in Delhi is doing now in contemporary India and the world. It may be noted that in his many writings such as *Islam and World Peace*, Maulana Khan is helping us realize Islam as a continued movement for peace. I also spoke about the solidarity between Herman Kallenbach, a Jewish architect in South Africa, and Gandhi and how both of them got inspiration from Tolstoy. Contemporary winters of despair and strivings for springs of solidarity need to do creative memory works of such traditions of multi-faith work, solidarization and transformation of consciousness. I also said that part of this transformation of consciousness is to realize the distinction between faith and belief. While contemporary forces of extremism, violence and bigotry are mobilizations of closed beliefs, our faith work can also transform this logic of violence.

After my sharing , a young high school student shared with us his experience. He told us that he is born in America and he is American but the contemporary climate makes him afraid. He is afraid of being bullied and attacked in the schools. After this, it was the turn for his mother Dr. Sophie to pour out her heart. Dr. Sophie is a pediatrician working in the local community. She is an immigrant but has got settled in the community and has consciously made the choice to live in the local community of Antioch and not in the bigger city of San Francisco. She said:

> I am your neighborhood pediatrician. I am your daughter. I know all of you. When I walk in the street you smile at me. Your children come to the same school as my son and they tell him that their parents have been treated by me. I have raised three children here. It is their home. America is their home. They have nowhere to go. But now I am scared to turn on the TV. I see the hysteria in the media. Fear is now creeping into our community. My sister is afraid to wear *hizab*. There is report of some pointing their fingers and guns at women wearing *hizabs*. Peace-loving Americans are afraid of Muslims. What can we do to push this fear. I am not afraid of Donald Trump. I am afraid of the 57 per cent silent majority.

The journey of being, feeling and thought in this afternoon of solidarity is linked to wider multi-faith work. McGarvey and friends

in the Contra Cost County Inter-Faith Council links inter-faith work with issues of justice reminding us the seminal work of theologians such as Paul F. Knitter who link inter-religious dialogues with works of global responsibility. After our assembly in the mosque, I had dinner with some of the activists of the county inter-faith council. McGarvey said that he and his friends provide shelter to the homeless population and different churches take turns to provide shelter and food. Chaplains of the churches work with juveniles in the prison and present ministry to them. Inter-faith council also works on climate change. Other members of the council coming from different backgrounds of science and religion bring their own perspective and dedication to such multi-faith works of creation and nurturance of solidarity. One of our friends on the table was a Hindu who works on inter-religious stories. Another friend, Ejaj Naqvi is an MD and author of the book *The Quran: With Or Against the Bible?* Dr. Naqvi told me how though he was born Muslim initially he was an atheist. But studying medicine and human body he felt the touch of God. He now brings this Creator of Life to his inter-faith work in community.

After our dinner, we all rushed to the celebration of the lighting of Hanukah Candle in a nearby locality. As may be known, Hanukah refers to part of Jewish history when a few Jews could fight against the occupying Greeks against persecution of their faith and they could defeat the imperial power. In the process, there was also a civil war between those Jews fighting against the oppressors as well as those who were collaborating with the powers. But Rabbi Dan welcoming us told us that Hanukah is not a symbol of war but a symbol of lighting for peace against the backdrop for struggle for religious freedom. Now as there is a growing Islamophobia, Hanukah is a place for religious faiths to come together.

Multi-faith lighting of Hanukah is only an expression of growing movement of grass-roots inter-faith and multi-faith work in the US. Earlier in the week I had taken part in the inter-faith breakfast meeting in San Francisco with which my kind and respected host Rabbi Pam has been involved. This is a breakfast event once a month in which leaders and lay people of different religions and denominations meet together. This inter-faith breakfast meet, like our earlier discussion of the integral link between dialogue and responsibility, is also related to education about crucial social issues. On that breakfast, we had a presentation on the social problem of dealing with young children who show gay or lesbian sexual orientations. The presentation by a nun presented the reality of social suffering and human tragedy when people in the name of religion become cruel to their children with different sexual orientations. Inter-faith work also calls for a

compassionate and proactive work in families, societies, schools and states to provide kind assurance and opportunities for blossoming children of different sexual orientations. Phobia, whether phobia of sexual orientation or phobia of other religions such as Islamophobia, is in epochal need for multi-dimensional healing transformations. America has set much adorable example for overcoming sexual phobia and now with the new springs of solidarity sprouting in souls and communities, it can also play her dignified historical role among comity of cultures, nations and communities in creating a society of creative religious freedom and spiritual commons. In our current fight against religious terrorism, a new spring of solidarity calls for all of us to fulfill our responsibility in overcoming fear of the other, and particularly the entrenched production of Islamophobia now.

Such a new spring of solidarity also started sprouting in the Parliament of World Religions held at Salt Lake City, Utah from October 15 to 21, 2015 in which I had taken part. This time the President of the Parliament was a Muslim Imam, Imam Malik Mujahid from Chicago. Along with Imam Mujahid, many Muslim leaders and lay people brought their struggle for peace, justice and dialogue to this yearning humanity of around 10, 000 people. Not only Muslims were conspicuous by their presence in this Parliament in the traditional land of the Mormons which in the process also has become more dialogical and open to inter-faith work, there was also almost the sweeping presence of the women religious leaders and indigenous spiritual leaders from the US and around the world. In fact, before the formal opening of the Parliament, there was an assembly of women spiritual leaders on Divine Mother in religions, societies, self and cosmos.

This work on activating and regenerating the Divine Mother in all religious traditions and beyond may help humanity to overcome the spiral of logic of violence unleashed by rise of world religions in history which were primarily patriarchal. These world religions whom philosopher and historian Karl Jespers and many of his uncritical followers celebrate as the rise of Axial Age and turning point of human consciousness began with killing of the Mother Goddesses. This killing is continuing unabated as forces such as ISIS, Boko Haram and Talibans are killing women and girl children and their fellow killers from other traditions continue the project of killing girls, children and women in the name of religion. The new spring of solidarity which has started blossoming in the recent Parliament of Religions is a silent turning over of this patriarchal Axial Age to one of giving birth to life and nurturing it for fullest development of all. It is possibly this Spirit of the Mother which is at work in the following Sura of Quran: 'When

you kill one life you kill the entire humanity, when you save one life you save the entire humanity.' President Obama who got Nobel Prize for Peace but after the peace prize ordered more drone attacks than his predecessor; Donald Trump is now whipping up the sentiment of Islamopobhia for narrow political gain. All of us can remember this line as a companion to fulfilling our own responsibility in creating springs of solidarity in our souls, communities, neighborhoods, nations and the world.

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In Memoriam: Anupam Mishra

Words are insufficient to describe the persona of Anupam Mishra. I was an occasional visitor to the Gandhi Peace Foundation office in my capacity as the Editor of Gandhi Marg (English). Anupam was my counterpart manning the independent Hindi edition of the journal, which has a larger readership, with Anupam himself being an established writer in his own right. We met at the dining hall of the Foundation during lunch time. Anupam used to invite me to share his tasty food prepared at home and a discussion always followed. He had a rare eagerness to learn about events taking place in far away places like Kerala. His absence is certainly a big blow to the Gandhian Movement and the Gandhi Peace Foundation. He was engaged in Gandhian action in several key areas without either coming into limelight or claiming credit for them. That such wonderful souls like him still exist in our midst instils hope. I am sure his legacy will inspire several Gandhian activists to engage in nishkama karma of the type that he did in the years to come.

-- John S Moolakkattu (Editor, Gandhi Marg)

The following rich tributes reflecting different facets of his life and contributions were paid by colleagues, noted writers and activists on Anupam Mishra. We are reproducing them with due permission and acknowledgement

The Quiet Fighter

Anupam Mishra wrote with insight and creativity about peasants, pastoralists and the sustainable use of water.

Ramachandra Guha

Rana Dasgupta ends Capital, his fine, sometimes searing portrait of the twenty-first century Delhi, with a walk he took with an environmental scholar through the city's northern reaches. The environmentalist explained to the writer how Delhi's water system had once worked, based on the retention of rainwater through an intricate network of tanks and canals. Before the British came, said the scholar, the life of Delhi was centred around the Yamuna, with festivals and water games. However, the capital of the Raj and of independent India treated the river merely as a sink for its wastes. And it had built over the tanks that the more far-seeing citizens of the earlier generations had constructed.

The Yamuna that now flows past Delhi is biologically (as well as culturally) dead. The scholar who took Dasgupta for a walk told him that "everyone has turned their backs on the river in obedience to the modern city, and so it is filthy and forgotten." He also remarked, "If our prime minister had to immerse himself in the Yamuna every year, it would be a lot cleaner than it is now."

The environmentalist who thus educated Dasgupta was named Anupam Mishra. Mishra who died of cancer on Monday morning, aged 68, was — in the words of Gopalkrishna Gandhi — an intellectual without a trace of snobbery, an activist who was never judgemental about what others did or did not do. He was an altogether remarkable man, who embodied both the best of what Indian scholarship can offer, as well as a Gandhism that is utterly relevant to the twenty-first century.

That Mishra was not as well known as he might have been — across India or abroad — was a consequence of his choosing to stay away from the language of power and fame. He knew English quite

well, but decided to be resolutely monolingual in his own work. There may have been three reasons for this. First, he was the son of a celebrated Hindi poet, Bhawani Prasad Mishra, and did not want to repudiate that legacy. Second, once he had chosen to write in Hindi, he had to wholly immerse himself in that linguistic world to be able to communicate effectively. Third, and perhaps the most important, since he wrote about the lifestyles and living practices of peasants and pastoralists in northern India who themselves spoke some variety of Hindi, it seemed more appropriate to write his own books and essays in that language. (Apart from a TED talk which has had close to 8,00,000 viewers , Mishra's work was done almost entirely in Hindi.

Some of his recent writings are available at http://www.mansampark.in)

The first book of Mishra I read (it may have been the first he wrote) was a short but extremely insightful study of the Chipko Andolan, written in collaboration with Satyendra Tripathi. It was published in the late 1970s, based on fieldwork in the villages of the upper Alaknanda Valley where Chipko was born. The book paid due attention to the efforts and vision of Chipko's leader, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, while also documenting the contributions of peasants, both men and women, who were the backbone of what was to become the most celebrated (as well as the most misunderstood) environmental movement in the non-Western world.

In the 1980s, Mishra turned his attention to water conservation and management. He realised that water, not oil, was the key to a sustainable future for India and the world. (As he put it in his TED talk, water is the centre of life.) He saw the callous treatment of water all around him, the pollution of rivers by careless city dwellers and the reckless depletion of groundwater aquifers by farmers with electric-powered tubewells. So, he began documenting the indigenous systems of water harvesting that were rooted in community control and based on a careful understanding of the local landscape.

He focused on Rajasthan, a desert environment with negligible natural rainfall, yet with a rich and still often extant network of wells and tanks. Based on research conducted over many years, he published a series of books and pamphlets in Hindi, whose titles — *Rajasthan ki rajat boondein* and *Aaj bhi khare hain talaab* — suggested that the modern man had much to learn from his predecessors, those he tended to condemn as stupid or backward.

I knew Mishra mostly through his work. I met him rarely, yet every encounter was either uplifting or transformative, sometimes both. In the 1980s, I went to consult him for my own doctoral research on the Chipko Andolan.

October'16–March'17

In the 1990s, when I was a fellow of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), I invited Mishra to give a talk around his book *Aaj bhi khare hain talaab*. The NMML, then led by the visionary Ravinder Kumar, was at the height of its glory, the very centre of Indian intellectual life, patronised by famous foreign scholars too. Here, through his understated words in Hindi and his arresting slides, Mishra delivered what was one of the most compelling talks ever heard at the NMML, its echoes resounding in conversations in the corridors for weeks afterwards.

A decade later, I heard Mishra speak at a meeting celebrating the work of Chandi Prasad Bhatt where, in a mere five or six minutes, he brilliantly summed up the essence of Bhatt's contributions to Gandhian thought and activism.

Our last meeting was a few months ago, when I went to call on him on hearing he had cancer. He was suffering visibly, yet spoke as softly and with as much depth as ever. With us was his young collaborator Sopan Joshi, who has, in recent years, done much to make Mishra's work reach a new generation.

Asked to identify five individuals who have contributed the most to the environmental movement in modern India, I would name the activists Chandi Prasad Bhatt and Medha Patkar, the scientist Madhav Gadgil, the journalist Anil Agarwal, and Anupam Mishra. Of these five, Mishra is by far the least-known, even among the environmental community. This is a consequence of the choices he made, personal as well as linguistic, by stressing reconstruction rather than protest, and by writing in Hindi rather than English.

We should remember Anupam Mishra for his substance, for writing with such insight and sensitivity about the resource most critical to our lives, yet one we so wantonly abuse — water. And we should remember him for his style — no boasting, no bombast, merely steady, solid work based on research and understanding, rather than ideology or prejudice.

http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/anupam-mishra-writer-yamuna-water-chipkoo-andolan-environmental-scholar-4437750/

*

Chipko Movement to Water Conservation: Anupam Mishra Leaves Behind a Rich Legacy of Knowledge

The 68-year-old Gandhian died on December 19, after a long and painful battle against cancer.

Harsh Mander

Gently and with the quiet dignity that characterised the way he lived his entire life, Anupam Mishra left the world on December 19, 2016. He was 68, felled after a long and painful battle against cancer. He leaves behind a massive and fertile legacy of knowledge distilled from centuries-old indigenous folk wisdom, about the ways that we must live with our planet, if our world and we are to survive.

I was privileged to know Anupam Mishra from the days of the Emergency, more than 40 years ago. The Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi, in those days, was a hub of resistance to the Emergency, and also a nucleus for the propagation and generation of Gandhian ideas. As a university student and for some years after, I volunteered with the foundation. Anupam Mishra had joined it a few years earlier, and he became in those days a close friend and thoughtful guide. I knew rural India too little at that time, except from books. With his encouragement and direction, I began to travel, and spent a few years trying to experience and understand India's rural people and life, and also the intolerable inequities and deprivations that characterised our countryside.

These were the initial years of my politicisation. I was attracted to the ideas of the Left, but also to Gandhi. Many of my learnings and insights about Gandhi came from the long conversations with Anupam. He had immersed himself in the Lohia movement after his post-graduate studies in Sanskrit in Hindu College, Delhi University, and volunteered to work with the towering Jayaprakash Narayan's campaign for the voluntary surrender of dacoits of the Chambal valley. This charismatic movement caught the imagination of the country at that time, because it powerfully demonstrated the application of Gandhian ideas to crime and punishment, building on the possibility of reform of even dreaded criminals through a change of heart. This

association led to Anupam's first book, *Chambal Ke Bandooke, Gandhi Ke Charanon Me*, written with journalist Prabhash Joshi and Shravan Kumar Garg.

The book is out of print, but I could find an extract:

"(T)he Chambal Valley – a place… enough to strike terror in one's heart – for this area has, through the ages, been an ideal sanctuary for people who, for various reasons, have turned outlaws. The martial background of the people, their fight against alien invaders and rulers, and the immense socio-economic disparities, have combined to produce rebels or 'baghis' – a name also given to the dacoits… In 1971… Jagroop Singh, an emissary of Madho Singh, another notorious dacoit… traced JP [Jayaprakash Narayan] to Patna. In spite of his preoccupations and ill health, JP, sensing a genuine change of heart and desire to solve the problem of dacoity, agreed to take up the challenge. He… issued an appeal on 13 December 1971, advising them to surrender, requesting the community to open its doors for their peaceful return to normal life and the government to consider their cases sympathetically. For six months, JP conducted his 'Operation Persuasion' not as a spiritual leader but as a social worker. Except for the daredevil Madho Singh, his contacts with the dacoits were through the Chambal Ghati Shanti Mission. Assisted by Pandit Lokman Dikshit, and Tehsildar Singh (ex-dacoits) and Madho Singh they worked day and night, not caring about their personal safety. The dacoits had to be traced in their hideouts, deep in the jungles and ravines. The Madhya Pradesh police had created an undeclared peace zone to make mobilisation easier. JP came into personal contact with the dacoits when he camped at the Pagara Dak Bungalow, 70 kilometres away from Gwalior and situated atop a hill. The dacoits with their families had been camping in the village of Dhorera down the hill. Dhorera, an otherwise sleepy village, won worldwide fame almost overnight. The first to come to meet JP was Mohar Singh, who carried the highest reward of Rs 2 lakh on his head. The government was sceptical about his desire to surrender because, unlike Madho Singh's, his gang was intact and he was equipped with most modern arms. He told JP that his only condition for surrender was that he should be the first! The dacoits formally surrendered in batches at the Mahatma Gandhi Seva Ashram in Joura, on 14 and 16 April 1972. Thousands watched them lay down their arms in front of a portrait of Gandhiji, and cheered them as they shouted 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai', 'Vinobaji ki Jai', 'Jaiprakashji ki Jai'. A wave of relief seemed to sweep the Valley of Terror."

Forest Hero

During the years that we spent together at the Gandhi Peace

Foundation, Anupam Mishra was greatly drawn to the Chipko Andolan led by Chandi Prasad Bhatt. With Satyendra Tripathi, he wrote *The Chipko Movement*, which was very influential in bringing to the attention of both India and the world at large this unique movement for "hugging the trees." In this evocative and effective form of mass non-violent resistance, women and men demanded that if a tree was to be felled, they should be cut down with it.

The carefully researched account described for the rest of the world this incipient eco-feminist mass movement of forest conservation that began in 1973. This went on to establish a precedent and a model for non-violent protest in India, as well as for many later environmental movements all over the world. Their account of this mass movement inspired many eco-groups around the world to fight deforestation, expose forest mafia, enhance ecological awareness and, above all, demonstrate the strength and weight of non-violent and grounded people's movements and struggles. Their reports highlighted, especially, the role of women as the backbone and also the mainstay of such struggles – women were the ones most affected by rampant deforestation because it resulted in shortages of firewood, fodder as well as water for drinking and farm irrigation, and ultimately added to the care and collection-based unpaid work burden on them.

I left the Gandhi Peace Foundation to join the Indian Administrative Service in 1980, and since I spent my subsequent years mostly in far-off corners of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, Anupam Mishra and I lost contact, although I remained informed and influenced by his work. After I finally returned to Delhi and especially after the Gujarat carnage of 2002, I became increasingly critical of the Foundation and Gandhians in general for not taking as strong and outspoken a stand against communal politics as I would have hoped. The few times I discussed this with Anupam Mishra, he did not dismiss me as judgemental as many others did. He listened to me in his gentle, civilised way.

Anupam Mishra remained for most of his adult life a staff member of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, serving several years at its helm as its Secretary as well. He retired in 2007, but the foundation was not willing to let him go and he, therefore, continued to work with it until he left the world. Yet, as pointed out by his close friend Himanshu Thakkar, he rarely described himself as a Gandhian. He was and remained one of the most credible faces of the institution, which otherwise had its peaks and troughs over the years. He also edited for many years a leading journal of Gandhian thought called *Gandhi Marg*.

Water Warrior

Anupam Mishra is, of course, best known for his work in discovering and chronicling traditional systems of water harvesting in water-scarce regions like Rajasthan. He celebrated the technical and environmental wisdom and skills of often non-literate creators and maintainers of these extraordinarily complex systems. His books, photographs, slides and talks about these have influenced two generations, not just of environmentalists but also students, engineers, social workers and thinking, concerned citizens. His writings on this subject have been translated into 19 languages from India and around the world, including Braille.

His son Shubham, an architect, told me about his work in recent years unearthing and documenting traditional water conservation, storage and regeneration systems in Delhi, to which successive dynasties contributed. Each contributed to recharging the underground water table, and these flowed into a series of small streams and rivulets that criss-crossed the city and then all flowed into the Yamuna. But today, these rivulets are dirty nallahs, the Yamuna a receptacle of all of Delhi's mostly untreated waste, and the city has recklessly built over its multitude of wells, tanks and water passages. Anupam Mishra could not live long enough to put these into a book, but his son is committed to collecting and putting up all of these, and indeed all his books, pictures and talks online as an open resource for future generations. It was a matter of principle for Anupam Mishra that all his books were without copyright, and this electronic resource will likewise be an open source.

There are few people who have contributed more to our understanding of not just traditional water systems but also people's own knowledge carried over through the generations than Anupam Mishra. His enduring influences are both on Indian environmental movements and the democratisation of knowledge itself. Yet, he remained self-effacing, low-key, deeply committed to immersing himself in his chosen work with hard work, study and research. His criticism of modern science and technology and government systems was laced in irony and wit rather than anger and judgement. There are few men as gentle and civilised as him, a man who was at once authentic, reflective, a fighter, and democratic. His passing leaves a large empty space in India's eco-democratic movements, which will be very hard to fill.

https://scroll.in/article/825070/chipko-movement-to-water-conservation-anupam-mishra-leaves-behind-a-rich-legacy-of-knowledge

Why Anupam Mishra was our Water Guru

Umesh Anand, New Delhi

The thirteenth anniversary issue of *Civil Society* with the Hall of Fame 2016 was out from the press and I had gone to Anupam Mishra's home to give him a copy. He looked at the picture of Uncle Moosa on the cover and said: *"Yeh aadmi apne chhote kaam se kitna kush hai. Iska kurta bhi khush hai!"*

It was Anupam Mishra's trademark humour, delivered with his customary mellifluous touch. But like everything about him, it was also full of meaning. As India's foremost authority on traditional water harvesting systems, he recognised the value of small and sustainable community efforts. So, in one glance, he could see Uncle Moosa's sense of fulfilment from creating tiny libraries in the remote villages and towns of Arunachal Pradesh. Not only was Uncle Moosa radiating happiness, but his kurta, too, was happy!

Anupam Mishra passed away on 19 December just three days short of 69. He succumbed to a brief but sapping encounter with cancer. He was a member of the advisory board of *Civil Society* magazine and my consistent and untiring friend.

Working for the Gandhi Peace Foundation (GPF) on a miniscule salary, he spent much of his life as an unsung researcher. He really didn't want it any other way. But as word spread of his deep understanding of water and conservation and the brilliant traditions of communities, he came to be valued as a speaker.

He was insightful and funny and dispensed his wisdom with a light touch. He would receive invitations to speak from across India and abroad. What he liked most was to help community groups. Towards the end he would accept most invitations and zip off every now and then, almost as though he knew he had to beat the clock. He addressed villagers, doctors, engineers, architects and people in government.

But he always found the limelight intrusive. A cover story on him in *Civil Society* in 2006 was done through subterfuge. He similarly had to be talked into allowing pictures to be taken and it meant leveraging all the affection he had for my son, Lakshman, who did the shooting. We headlined that cover story, The Water Guru — nothing less would do because so many 'water men' already existed!

He was a firm believer that quality and output were in no way

related to money. He didn't see merit in chasing funding in the typical NGO way and too much money was definitely a bad thing in his opinion. Nor was he impressed by mere slogans and shibboleths. Social initiatives had to be community efforts which were self-sustained and purposeful. It was important that they be well directed. He abhorred aggressive behaviour, insisting that change could only come through persuasion and love.

So it was that on a shoestring budget he brought out *Gandhi Marg* a small, beautifully produced and professionally edited magazine in Hindi. Till the end he and his wife, Manju, would read the proofs themselves. Pieces in *Gandhi Marg* would be extensively rewritten so that they acquired a simple and easy flow.

He wholeheartedly endorsed *Civil Society's* mission of being a small and independent magazine committed to high production standards and clear editorial values. He also agreed with us that it had to be a business to be recognised as journalism, instead of being an NGO or foundation where the funding would decide the content.

It was smallness and community effort that also drew him to the Civil Society Hall of Fame. He was on the jury and, together with Manju, made it a point to be at every annual recognition ceremony. It was only at the last one on 12 November that he and Manju weren't present because he was too unwell and in hospital.

Rita and I went to meet him the night before the event and though we chatted and he was alert, it was clear that the cancer was winning. He asked to be phoned from the venue so that he could know that the event had been held nicely. Of course I did that once the citations had been presented and he wanted to know why he couldn't hear Indian Ocean playing in the background. I told him it was because I had walked a bit down Lodi Road to see off Dr Mashelkar, who was our chief guest and was leaving a little before the end.

In a lifetime of barefoot research for GPF's Environment Cell Anupam scoured much of the country trying to understand collection, storage and dispersal in traditional water systems. He tracked tanks and stepwells like no one else in India has. He went deep into cultural practices and forgotten technologies in his quest to learn how communities deal with water scarcities and equally daunting problems of surplus in India's driest state, Rajasthan.

NO ROYALTY, NO COPYRIGHT

Much of this learning has gone into two books in Hindi: *Aaj bhi khare hain talaab* and *Rajasthan ke rajat boodein.* The first title has done over 100,000 copies, which must surely be a record in Indian publishing. Anupam hasn't taken a rupee by way of royalty nor does he have the

copyright. Anyone is free to print the books.

Both his books have inspired people to do their own thing with water. Many have gone from being casual readers to avid practitioners — digging tanks, building bunds and generally trapping rainwater where it falls.

Anupam's quest was a Gandhian one. His strength was his empathy and compassion which allowed him to go deep. His was a search for solutions that involved people, particularly those who don't have a voice and live in the fragmented fringes of the economy. He spoke their language and wasn't in a hurry to understand their lives.

The Gandhian way is of governance through self-help and articulation of local needs and solutions. Nothing perhaps serves the management of water better in India because it is hugely diverse in topography, far-flung and beholden to a few months of rain in the year.

The research that Anupam undertook in the Environment Cell of GPF was really aimed at learning how people met their own needs for water for thousands of years before the centralised model of administration arrived under the British.

It is this perspective that led him to celebrate not giant irrigation works and other temples to technology, but the humble tank. Two million tanks had been dug by communities before British rule and they worked efficiently for people by collecting rain and raising groundwater levels. They were a dependable source of safe water. Importantly, tanks could be built by leaving habitats intact and because there was a sense of ownership over them they were maintained.

The tank, the *bund* and the well for centuries served to keep the hydrological cycle in good health. People knew how to make and maintain them. They drew on them with an eye on the sky, being conservative in times of scarcity and leaving surpluses in the bank for difficult days. There was balance.

For instance, a *johad* in Churu district in Rajasthan is a marvel of engineering. It has three tiers on four sides. Till the rains end in September, water collects and comes to the top. As the months pass into winter and then to March and summer, the open water surface reduces to half together with the depth. What does this do? It reduces the evaporation. In addition, there is a narrow ledge at each level to trap silt. Why does this matter? If the silt were not trapped, it would go all the way to the bottom and getting it out of there would be much more difficult.

Similarly, the Toda Rai Singh tank was built at least 350 years ago and was meant to serve the irrigation needs of 18 villages. Incredibly, it continues to perform that role though it has been acquired by the

irrigation department of Rajasthan.

What happened to these tanks and stepwells, many of which were built with great effort and expertise and can even today be regarded as marvels of engineering? Why did Anupam need to put in years of dedicated exploration to rediscover these subtle equations in water if at one time they did so much for people? Many of them remain in use today and are more reliable sources of supply than what the government has set up. Why then was it essential to seek so hard to understand their worth?

The answer lies in the shift to a centralised regime under the British and the continuance of such a top-down model of governance in independent India. Management of resources such as water and forests went out of the hands of the people who depended on them and into the files of an amorphous government. Over the years local initiatives petered out and efficient traditional technologies went into disuse.

By the late seventies and early eighties it was clear that serious problems related to water were looming up. Irrigation departments and their engineers couldn't deliver to people what people had been able to give themselves with efficiency at one time. That gap has only widened.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

It was in the late seventies that Anupam began working as a young researcher, in the Environment Cell of GPF. His father, Bhawani Prasad Mishra, the poet, was a Gandhian and a freedom fighter.

The journey to GPF was, therefore, a short one. However, it wasn't an inevitable journey because Anupam had a Master's in Hindi literature and perhaps it would have been natural for him to choose teaching as a career. But the first job he got at GPF was to read proofs for Rs 350 a month. Very quickly he became involved with the Environment Cell. The first area of concern was water and Anupam found himself travelling across the country for his research.

It is a strange conspiracy of circumstances that seems to have made a water researcher out of a poet's son. Anupam has a flair for writing and sensitivity to cultural traditions and both have proved to be vital in seeking an understanding of the problems relating to water.

"If I had studied engineering, I would have gone in a different direction. If I was very good I would have ended up at MIT or some such place. If I was no good I would have landed in Ghaziabad," Anupam once said to me in his usual funny way.

A student of literature on the other hand has no hesitation in entering through cultural trapdoors in search of lost science and

technology. "Technology gets absorbed and embedded in culture. Rediscovering it means understanding culture first," Anupam explained.

So it was that *Aaj bhi khare hain talaab* got written over 10 long years and published in 1993, a slim book almost poetic in design, embellished with fine line drawings and packed with vivid accounts of community efforts in water.

In 23 years, this book, going from hand to hand, growing from one imprint to the next, has done more to change the way people think about water than any other work. It is available in Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu. GPF only publishes one of the Hindi versions. It is always sold out even before it comes off the press. All the editions, apart from the GPF one, have been brought out by people who have read the book and felt influenced by it. Stories abound about each imprint.

Perhaps this is the only example of its kind of community publishing and absence of copyright for truly original work. It is not insignificant that such an effort should relate to water. So severe are the scarcities that the country is facing and so ineffective are the efforts of governments that people feel the need to take over as they once did.

http://www.civilsocietyonline.com/tribute/water-guru-is-no-more/

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The Man who Slaked India's Thirst

Anupam Mishra, who spent three decades fighting for rejuvenation of India's traditional water harvesting systems, died on December 19

Joydeep Gupta

If many of India's ponds, wells, stepwells, springs, check dams and other traditional water harvesting systems are still in working order today, if at least a few of India's rivers have been revived,

much of the credit must go to Anupam Mishra. Through reportage, analysis and advocacy sustained over three decades, this incisive speaker who never raised his voice ensured that all of India's traditional ways of conserving water are not given up to chase the mirage of piped water supply for everybody.

Mishra toured Rajasthan – India's most water-scarce state – during the drought years of 1986 and 1987 and found villages that were able to cope because residents had conserved their wells and protected the slopes so that water could flow down to these wells. This was in sharp contrast to the majority of villages where engineers from the public works department of the state government had promised piped water supply and discouraged residents from conserving the wells – they could not keep the promise in drought years.

Mishra's incisive reportage on this was followed by travel across the length and breadth of India to study traditional water harvesting systems, and culminated in the book *Aaj bhi khare hai talaab* (Even today, the ponds are standing). Published in 1993, the book has sold over 200,000 copies, been translated into 10 languages, and is even today considered a must-read for anyone who wishes to understand the basics of rural development in South Asia.

Born on December 22, 1947, Mishra started his lifelong association with the Gandhi Peace Foundation in 1969. One of his first missions was to be in the team that negotiated the surrender of the dacoits of Chambal in the 1970s.

In 1973, Mishra heard about a movement by the residents of Chamoli district in then Uttar Pradesh (now Uttarakhand) to protest cutting of trees by a sports goods manufacturing firm. His pioneering reportage on it brought what is now known as the Chipko Movement to the world stage.

Friend to Many

Till his dying day, Mishra remained a friend, philosopher and guide to the Chipko Movement, a role he also played to hundreds of people working to save ponds, wells, stepwells, springs or check dams. When Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh – known as the waterman of India – first conceived the idea of reviving a small river in Rajasthan, Mishra acted as the mentor.

Mishra's research into traditional water harvesting had practical fallouts. In his book, he described a water management system, that used to be practised in the Garhwal Himalayas, but had fallen into disuse for over 200 years. The system was revived once the book was published, and continues today with great success. All over India, at least 5,000 large and small ponds have been revived by people inspired

by the book.

When Mishra spoke at public gatherings, he was barely audible, but the sharpness of his arguments compelled attention – including by policymakers. Traditional water harvesting systems now form an integral part of every official water policy document.

A recipient of the Jamnalal Bajaj Award and the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Mishra remained a trenchant critic of government policies such as the river-interlinking scheme. In one of his more recent speeches, he demolished the government case to link the rivers Ken and Betwa in northern Madhya Pradesh, and showed how it would be financially and ecologically better to provide water by harvesting rainfall.

His interests went beyond environment. I met him in 1991, when he was trying to put together a peace mission in an effort to avert the First Gulf War. By the time the mission was put together, the war had started and the plan had to be aborted. But peace – domestically and internationally – was one of the goals he pursued forever.

Besides writing, speaking and mentoring a whole generation of journalists, Mishra ran the environment unit of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and edited the foundation's Hindi bi-monthly journal Gandhi Marg. His last public appearance was at the inauguration of India Rivers Week 2016 on November 28. He had already been fighting cancer since the early months of the year, and he looked visibly ill. When I greeted him and asked him after his health, he said, "The doctors have given me just a few weeks more. Still, I decided I had to come for this, to honour those who have dedicated their lives to the cause of reviving rivers."

Mishra died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences early on the morning of December 19. He leaves behind his wife Manjushree and son Shubham.

http://indiaclimatedialogue.net/2016/12/19/man-slaked-indias-thirst/

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India Will Be Hard-Pressed to Find Another Anupam Mishra

In November, after a very cogent public speech on India's rivers, he was completely exhausted and in pain. But that he came anyway showed his dedication.

Himanshu Thakkar

"I need to go and pay respect to the people fighting for India's rivers" insisted the weak Gandhian, barely able to walk, on November 28. In his speech at the India Rivers Week's inaugural ceremony on that day, Anupam Mishra, with his characteristically wry humour, asked whether changing stones and electric poles at the *ghats* was all that the government had to offer to rejuvenate the Ganga. He said that no amount of faith or funds would help the river unless we understood where the river was getting its fresh and polluted waters from.

Twenty days later, I could not believe that Anupam *ji* was no more. He breathed his last at AIIMS, Delhi, at 5.27 am on December 19, 2016. He was suffering from two cancers; doctors had tried everything to save him after complications had developed while at a private hospital earlier. He is survived by his wife and a son, Shubham.

Born in Wardha, Maharashtra, on June 5, 1948, he was the son of the famous poet Bhawani Prasad Mishra. He worked at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in the national capital in different capacities after finishing college in 1969. In his life, Anupam *ji* was known as a Gandhian author and environmentalist, with a focus on water conservation and traditional rainwater harvesting techniques and management systems. He rarely invoked the name of Gandhi himself – but he could connect to his principles and ideals in a way that would appeal to all, including the young. He was the editor of the bi-monthly publication *Gandhi Marg*, published by the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

Anupam *ji* is perhaps best known for his knowledge about India's traditional water-harvesting techniques. After eight years of rigorous field work on these issues, his most famous book, *Aaj Bhi Khare Hain Talaab* (Hindi for 'Ponds Are Still Relevant'), was published on the subject of traditional pond- and water-management. It was translated into 19 languages (including braille) and sold over 100,000 copies. *Rajasthan Ki Rajat Boondein* ('The Radiant Raindrops of Rajasthan'), his next publication, in 1995, was specifically about water-harvesting and management in the western parts of Rajasthan.

He travelled extensively in towns and villages across several Indian states, including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, describing the value of time-tested systems of water-harvesting. Amazingly, all his books are free of copyright and are available as PDFs on the web. A sole request is that it will be nice if the source is acknowledged. And through his books or not, it is safe to say that almost all work on local water systems in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and elsewhere in recent decades were inspired by Anupam *ji*'s work, either directly or indirectly.

Anupam *ji* was conferred the 1996 Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskar by the Ministry of Environment. He was awarded the Amar Shaheed Chandrasekhar Azad National Award in 2007 by the Madhya Pradesh government. He gave a TED talk titled 'The ancient ingenuity of water-harvesting' in 2009. He is also the recipient of the Jamnalal Bajaj Award, 2011.

Besides these accolades, he was the Chairman of the Organising Committee of India Rivers Week 2016 and a member of the Bhagirath Prayas Samman (an award for exemplary work on river conservation) jury since its inception in 2014. In spite of his poor health and weak body, he came to our Organising Committee meetings several times, most recently in September (note: Himanshu Thakkar helms the South Asian Network on Dams, Rivers and People). After the inaugural session of India Rivers Week, after a typically cogent speech, he was completely exhausted and in pain. But that he came anyway showed his dedication to the cause.

Personally, he was most affectionate and encouraging of my activities for over two decades. When he wrote a postcard to me some 20 years ago, I was just starting my work on India's water-policy issues. I hadn't expected it at all, but ever since, he had been relentlessly pushing me on. I later learnt that he was that way to many other people, working on problems to do with India's water and environment.

India will be hard-pressed to find another Anupam *ji*. As Ravi Chopra, Director of People's Science Institute, Dehradun, has said, he was truly unique, incomparable and matchless. And when a friend and colleague like myself feels so much for the loss, I can only imagine how his close family and friends must be feeling. His legacy is so rich that one is tempted to believe that it will never fade. In his last public appearance, when he delivered that speech through so much pain, he had ended by saying that we need to save our rivers for our own survival. He also said that the rivers week initiative must continue.

One hopes that this statement alone should suffice to remind us

every day of the tasks that lie ahead. We *must* succeed in our work.

https://thewire.in/88340/anupam-mishra-obit/

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Anupam Mishra, Noted Environmentalist and Gandhian Ideologue, Passes Away at Sixty-Eight

Mishra, who belonged to Madhya Pradesh, died on Monday at the age of 68 after a long battle with cancer.

Debobrat Ghose

Noted environmentalist Anupam Mishra wore many hats: he was an environmentalist, a journalist, an author and an authoritative voice in the field of water conservation in India. But after his demise, besides all these adjectives, he will be remembered as a true Gandhian ideologue and an effective communicator of his ideas, who emphasized on India's ancient and traditional ways of water conservation.

A Pune-based environmentalist and Mishra's namesake Anupam Saraph, who came in touch with the late environmentalist in early 1990, says, "We came to know each other through a common friend, Joan Davis, Director of Water Research Institute in Zurich, who wanted us to meet as we shared the common name and had been working for a common cause. First, it was through postcards and then emails. Finally, we met after three years and our friendship continued till he breathed his last."

Mishra had a witty and wise way to address any problem. He always used to look at issues with different perspectives. He would use a mix of simple language and emotions to explain the gravity of

water related issues with remarkable optimism.

"During the workshops that we attended together, I found a rare quality in him — he was an excellent listener who, instead of talking about his ideas or blowing his own trumpet, used to build up others' perspective and present it with simplicity. The best way of paying tribute to Anupam would be to recognize his body of work and follow his ancient and traditional way of water conservation and rain water harvesting model, rather than blindly following modern technology," Saraph said.

Mishra's friends and associates remember him as a person, who never had any ego and believed in simple living based on Gandhian principles.

"Throughout his life, his lifestyle reflected commitment to Gandhian principles. In one word, he was truly *Anupam* (unique/ incomparable in Hindi). I never saw him getting angry. Even when his views were being strongly opposed, he used to sweetly register his protest, and became ironical when he was sad," said Ravi Chopra, Director, People's Science Institute, Dehradun.

"What made him different from his fellowmen? It was his consistent hard work. He would go to the remotest parts of the country, where we couldn't, to pursue his mission of water conservation. His uniqueness lay in appreciating the "local and traditional ways of rain water harvesting and conservation of water bodies," he said.

Mishra was highly influenced by his father Bhavani Prasad Mishra, a Gandhian poet and litterateur.

A recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award, Amar Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad National Award and many others, Mishra was the editor of the bi-monthly 'Gandhi Marg,' published by the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

You don't need money to protect environment; but you need to tell people about their tradition and they have to live up to it.

Environmentalist Amla Ruia, Chairperson, Aakar Charitable Trust, which is also engaged in water conservation said, "It's a great loss to India and to the cause of water conservation. He made immense contribution through his work, writing and guidance, and was a great human being."

Referring to Mishra's book titled *Talab* (Pond), which has been translated in many languages including French, Chopra said, "I owe a personal debt to him as I learnt so much from his works. I got immensely fascinated by his traditional ways of water-harvesting." Chopra feels that the country would miss Mishra's sage advice on matters of environmental conservation.

October'16–March'17

"You don't need money to protect environment; but you need to tell people about their tradition and they have to live up to it," Chopra quoted Mishra as saying. But, there is more to Mishra's ideology.

Prof. Anand Kumar, a leader of Swaraj Abhiyan and a close friend and associate for more than four decades, recalls Mishra's staunch support to the anti-emergency movement and his association with Jayprakash Narayan.

"After his education from Delhi University, he got into Lohiya movement. He was close to Jaiprakash ji (Jaiprakash Narayan) and got to work with him in early 1970s during the surrender of dacoits. He wrote *Chambal Mein Atmasamarpan* (Surrender in Chambal), and through this work, people came to know about the historical contribution of JP."

Kumar also states that during the emergency, when Jaiprakash Narayan was shifted to Mumbai for treatment, Mishra had even organised a secret meeting with him and other fellows on anti-emergency movement, a fact very few people know about him. Mishra also played an instrumental role in scripting India's first State of Environment report in 1980.

"He was a multi-dimensional personality, an effective communicator, an unassuming and humble person with remarkable clarity on the state of water resources and rivers in India. In the last 20 years, he helped me in my mission without any inhibitions. He attended his last public function on 28 November that was organized by us. Despite his failing health, he spoke extensively with alertness and was well-informed," summed up Himanshu Thakkar, Coordinator, South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), an organization working for water resource development.

http://www.firstpost.com/india/anupam-mishra-noted-environmentalist-and-gandhian-ideologue-passes-away-at-68-3163982.html

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