CHAPTER III

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Mahatma Gandhi's indictment of modern civilization, his views of political and especially of social and individual ethics are firmly based upon his conception of human nature and human perfectibility. He views man in his wholeness. Gandhi expressed the good of mankind as his supreme concern through all his writings, speeches and actions whether they were political, social, economic or religious. His views on human nature are bound up with certain metaphysical and moral principles. Human life is useful, meaningful and purposeful for him. For Gandhi, man is not only a creation of God but a seat of the divine. As an Advaitin, he finds no contradiction between man and God and between man and the lower order creation. He is highly influenced by the Upanisadic philosophy, thus he believes in the essential unity of man also in the rest of the whole creation. "I believe in advaita, believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives." 1 The Upanisadic conception of Brahman expressed man's aspiration for the unification and harmony of the infinite, limitless human community. But this great dream was not realized in practice. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present the nature of man in the philosophy of Gandhi.

1. W. K. Bose, Selections From Gandhi, p. 25
The term 'man' anthropologically means a bipedal primate mammal, individual of the genus Homo, a being different from the animals by development of knowledge, speech and reason. Man has many possibilities of entering into communion with things and to live them in himself. Man has his characteristic and unique mode of experiencing things; besides the senses, he is endowed with a faculty that distinguishes him from all other sensible creatures - the intellect.

Since man appeared on the earth and as his intelligence developed, he started defining himself- his evolution, history and progress. In the earliest stages of life man was not aware of himself as a human being. He lived in unity with nature as part of nature. Human history began with the development of man's self-awareness. It is a process in which man developed his consciousness, his specifically human qualities, his powers of love, compassion, reason, understanding and mutual assistance and above all his conception of human freedom. Mind is considered as man's chief glory and the instrument which has enabled him to accomplish all the wonders of civilization. Thus the stream of human history flows in a very interesting channels." To demote man from his special position in the world was Darwin. While Copernicus may have left man at the centre of things in this world, if not in the cosmos, Darwin dissolved the line dividing man from animals. Thus men were forced to accept that although they felt that they possessed divine souls, which was what made them distinct from the beasts- there was no scientific proof of their existence, whereas science did seem to show that
men possessed many characteristics in common with animals."² But by the gradual development of his mental and spiritual powers he was able to prove himself as a potential and significant being in the universe.

Etymologically the term 'man' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Manu' Which means a thinking being, one who possesses a sense of discrimination which enables him to tell what is ethically sound from what is morally repugnant. It means that as a human being man is said to be endowed with spiritual qualities that distinguish him from other beings.

As a cosmic reality, man occupies the summit of the pyramid of existents and contains all their values. This fact of common experience requires a philosophical justification. In his physical capacities man is superior to other beings, because his physical nature is better organised and exhibits a great unity. The presence of the brain - system in the body distinguishes man from every other species and gives him a unique status in the world. This uniqueness of his physical nature is also due to the presence of spirituality in him. In the language of Rabindranath Tagore, "As an animal he is still dependent on nature, as a man he is a sovereign who builds his world and rules it."³ As Lokamanya Tilak observes, "The organs of a man urge him to behave like a beast, and his intelligence pulls

². John-Shoffman, Images of Man in Psychological Research, p. 17-18
³. Rabindranath Tagore, The Religion of Man. P.43
him in the opposite direction. Those persons who redeem themselves by sacrificing the animal tendencies rampant in their bodies into the fire of this warfare are the true sacrificers, and are indeed blessed.\textsuperscript{4}

Regarding the nature of man, the account of the origin of man brings two factors - Biological or physical nature and Spiritual nature. In the first, man continues to have that biological and physical nature which he has received from evolution, secondly, he has within him a spiritual nature which makes him unique and gives to him some amount of freedom. In the same way, Radhakrishnan also gives a spiritual interpretation to the modern theory of evolution. He maintains that man is the higher product of evolutionary process. Spiritual evolution takes place after the emergence of man. The spirit in man brings a promise of highest future development.

Gandhi claims to be a fairly accurate observer of human nature. He does not regard man to be all good. In human nature, there is a mixture of good and evil, animality and rationality, because man behaves sometimes good and sometimes very irrational like animals. Man is a rational animal. Man shares many properties (e.g. birth, growth, appetites, instincts, decay and death) with animals. And in eating, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the

\textsuperscript{4} - \textit{B.G. Tilak, \textit{Chitra} - Rahasya Vol. I, } p. 36
brute." Man has two natures - higher and lower. The spirit in men is
divine and flesh is beast. Reason and conscience manifest the divine or
higher nature and passions and cravings of the flesh display the animal or
lower nature. By the lower nature man becomes the victim of evil forces
and temptations. Irrational desire for worldly possessions and enjoyments
awakes evil forces in man and then it is the duty of man to control such
animal propensities and create opportunities for manifestation of divinity
in man. The lower nature of man is to be controlled in him. However,
Gandhi's firm conviction is that moral qualities and goodness
preponderate over evil in human nature. Gandhi writes, "I believe that the
sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down, but to lift us
up and that is the result of the definite if unconscious, working of the law
of love."6

'Man is a rational animal' means man belongs to animal
kingdom where state of being man is attained through evolutionary
process upto rational stage. Therefore, animality found sometimes in man
is not absurd. It is true that animality, the common character is found
among the primitive men. The degree of animality is progressively
reduced among the civilized people. But it is not totally subdued in man.
Both the attributes of good and evil are inherent in man. Gandhi also
believes in the evolution of man from the lower grades of animal to higher

5. Harijan, 7-9-46, P-74
6. Young India, 12-11-1931,
levels of humanity, guided by love, peace, harmony, etc. Man is born with brute nature, but he is born to realise God, who is seated in him and that particular privilege has made him man, distinguishing him from other lower creatures. Gandhi remarks, "that we have become man by a slow process of evolution from the brute. We were thus born with brute strength, but we were born men in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man, and it distinguishes him from the brute creation." The ultimate goal of man is the realization of the divinity and for this realisation, man need constant Sadhana both external and internal. Radhakrishnan says, "there is an insistent need in the human so to come to terms with the unseen reality."

Though Gandhi does not believe in the complete perfection of men, nevertheless, he believes in their perfectibility, because he has a firm faith in man's capacity for the highest possible moral and spiritual development. Gandhi writes, "My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence."

In the history of philosophy different thinkers have given thought and attention to the question regarding the status and nature of man. The views of human nature that men have held in the past fall into three broad groups.

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7. Harijan, 2-4-1936
8. S. Radhakrishnan, Kalki or the Future of civilization. P.55
9. M.K. Gandhi, Non-violence in Peace and War, P.190
The first is that, there are those who say that human nature is essentially evil. They insist that man has been and always will be selfish, irrational, cruel and destructive. Today such persons are likely to support their view by pointing to wars, revolutions, crime and other social evils. This view has received support from at least three sources:

(a) Some theologians including Augustine (354-430), emphasized the inability of sinful man to do any good through his own efforts. Man's nature was said to be corrupt and evil. During the Protestant Reformation, Luther and Calvin reaffirmed many of the views set forth by Augustine, including his view of corrupted human nature.

(b) The classical economists popularized the idea that, under economic incentives, man acts only in accord with his individual interest. "Economic man" is essentially selfish.

(c) Nineteenth century biological science sets forth the view, that man like other animals inherits an array of drives or fixed instincts acquired in the struggle for existence. Hence he can be expected to exhibit all the animal tendencies.

The Second view is that, human nature is good. It has many ancient as well as modern supporters - In the eighteenth century,
Rousseau (1712-1778) announced that nature is good; since man is a part of nature, he too is good.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the view that human nature is good was supported by an interpretation of evolution as inevitable progress. For Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), a popularizer of the theory of evolution, the course of evolution meant change for the better. Therefore, the chief duty of man is to stand aside, keep hands off the cosmic process, and trust to evolution to bring changes in the human organism.

The Third view of human nature maintains that man is born neither good nor evil but with great possibilities for both tendencies. Starting at birth, the child, like the plant or the animal, has an innate urge to grow, but the conditions necessary for growth must be present or the organism is stunted or dies. If unfavourable conditions persist, the child may become neurotic and antisocial.

We find both constructive and destructive possibilities within man. Koren Horney says that "briefly, our belief is that the constructive possibilities stem from man's essential nature, from the core of his being, from what we call his real self .......... Man turns unconstructive or
destructive only if he cannot fulfil himself - that it is an unfulfilled life which makes him barren on destructive." Besides them-

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) has given conception of human nature as intrinsically and entirely selfish and devoid of any genuine feelings of sympathy. Man basically is conceived as a self-centred being as a selfish individual who, for the sake of his own pleasure, feels the need of making adjustments with others and consequently enters upon, what can be called, a social contract.

Psycho-analysts reduce man to the instinctual, to the animal. The Psychologists regard human nature as the organisation of instincts, impulses and emotions. Freud and the Freudians, for example, try to paint a complete picture of man on the basis of their analysis of unconscious urges and impulses.

The Darwinian theory of the 'Descent of Man' from the ape treats man as no other than an animal.

The Hedonists look upon man as a creature which always seeks its own physical pleasure as any other animal.

Immanual Kant (1724-1802) stated that there is an inborn moral sense in man's mind which commands him for doing good and avoiding evil. A newly born baby comes to the earth with neutral nature. If he could be brought under good environment he could adopt good nature.

Sociologists try to explain the nature of man as essentially and basically a social creature; apart from society he cannot even exist. They emphasise the importance of social factors and seek to reduce man entirely to his social conditions.

Metaphysicians believe that explaining the nature of man means discovering the common and essential characters of man.

Aristotle describes man as a rational animal suggesting that this description represents the character that every man necessarily shares with every other man. In contrast with the viewpoint of Aristotelian Cosmology which subordinate man to the incorruptible superior worlds. St. Thomas Aquinas places man at the centre of the Universe: "The rational soul is nobler than anybody whatsoever and than the heaven."11

According to Gandhi, none of the above views about man is adequate, all such accounts of man are partial or superficial analysis of

man's external behaviours and conduct. All of them emphasise the physical and material aspects of man. Gandhi feels that man is a complex being; his body is natural in so far as it is akin to other objects of nature. The body grows and decays according to the Laws of Nature. This aspect of man represents merely the physical aspect.

Man's body and mind are intimately related to each other. If one suffers, is out of order, the other is also badly affected by that. Body and mind should work in co-operation with each other. If the physical body is controlled, mind should not be allowed to indulge in evil thoughts. Gandhi believes in the influence of heredity and environment in the building of man's personality.

But man is not only a physical being. He has a spirit or soul. "Man is not all body but he is something infinitely higher." 12 The body can die, whereas the soul is immortal. "When the body is taken away, his soul finds another." 13 Man may use the body for the purpose of self-realisation. The soul or atman is part and parcel of God. Man has many other qualities like consciousness, reason, conscience, will, emotion etc. He has aesthetic sense, a feeling-sensibility, and an insight into the nature of good and bad which are not just physical but expressions of the spirit or soul present in him.

12. K.T. Naransimsha, (ed), A Day Book of thoughts from Mahatma Gandhi, P.95  
13. Ibid, P.120
Man is distinguished from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane. Thus the essential difference between man and brute, according of Gandhi, is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him and rise above the level of passions that he owes in common with the brute. Gandhi believed in the existence of Soul. It is self-acting, persists even after death and its existence does not depend upon physical body. Soul is the link between God and man. It is the Godhead within man. Hence the 'Soul-force' for Gandhi is the greatest force than the physical force.

But body and soul are not two ultimate and independent realities. The only ultimate reality is God, who is manifested differently as body and as spirit, as matter and consciousness. Gandhi is not a dualist but a monist who believes in one all-pervasive reality.\textsuperscript{14} Gandhi's conception of nature of man is based on his metaphysical conviction. As a monist he believes in the reality of one Supreme God. Man is an expression of that one reality. Both the bodily and the spiritual aspects of man are expressions of God. Man is essentially divine and spiritual. He is a part of God. Gandhi believes that the spiritual aspect of man represents man's superior and true nature simply because it is akin to Divine nature. There is an element of Divinity present in every man, which is expressed in various ways. The presence of reason, conscience, free-will etc. is an evidence of the presence of this element in man. According to Gandhi if these divine elements are used in the right manner man can bring heaven

\textsuperscript{14} D.M.Datta., The philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, PP.67-68
on this earth. Gandhi represents the true nature of man as a complex being. His body is a part and product of nature and it grows and decays according to the laws of nature. The body is born of the parents and therefore, 'the original capital on which a child starts life is inherited from its ancestors', and the 'environment does play an important part'.

Gandhi was deeply influenced by the fundamental teachings of the Upanisads, the Gita and the Bhagavad Purana etc. The nature of man according to the fundamental teachings of these scriptures is spiritual in essence. The Vedas never view man as a separate entity but as the companion of God, as a part of the whole Being and as an instrument of the divine. Gandhi laid stress on the spiritual nature of man, and the essence of the spirit of soul in freedom. It is above and beyond both matter and mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom. Man is more than matter. He is a vibrant, living spirit, a spark of the divine fire. Thus for Gandhi man is no weakling but a perpetual reservoir of Strength. The strength of man is an efflorescence of the spirit which is the permanent element in human nature. The belief in the essential spirituality and goodness of every man leads Gandhi to believe further in the essential unity of mankind. This unity is, expressed both in the life of an individual and in social life. He says, "I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity....... though we have
many bodies, we have but one soul. The rays of sun are many through refraction, but they have the same source."15

Gandhi's views on human nature are based on metaphysical and moral principles. He believes in the reality of one Supreme God. Whatever we come across in an expression of the one God and man is also an expression of that one reality. Gandhi believes in the essential unity of man and also in the rest of the whole creation. Man's self or soul is nothing but Brahman; so man is a part of the one Ultimate Reality. There is an inherent relationship between man and God......."That Thou Art". Here "that" stands for God and "Thou" stands for God in the form of man. Man has no independent existence apart from God. Man is identical with Brahman. Man is not only a creation of God but a seat of the divine. Gandhi asserts that if these Divine elements are used in the right manner; man can bring heaven on this earth.

The instinct is an inheritance from nature in human life, which is available in man and animals both. Due to this nature man can go down to the animality in nature. In this sense, violence and wars are an indissoluble part of human nature and beneficial to world order whether from the point of view of keeping balance in population, developing discipline and heroism or as a weapon of class struggle towards ultimate justice. On the other hand theological belief is that man is basically good after the image of the Divine and evil is foreign to his original nature.

15. Young India, 25-9-24
Instinct is an innate nature which comes with birth to a man. Human organism is related with the objects. Any emotional excitement comes out automatically in the form of instinctive expression. Instincts are flexible elements of human nature, because man can modify his instincts in different stages of life. Instinctive nature in childhood and in adult stage vary with his behaviour. For example adult person can control and accordingly he can change his behaviour by his sentiments which come from instinct.

The ultimate aim of man's life, according to Gandhi, is self-realization, which means realizing Absolute Truth or seeing God face to face. The only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and to be one with it.\textsuperscript{16} A belief in the divinity of all results in having a non-violent attitude to all. Although outwardly man appears to be selfish and even brutish, inwardly and essentially he is good. Man as spirit is essentially non-violent; violence is alien to man's nature. Gandhi is an advocate of the doctrine of non-violence or ahimsa. He glorifies non-violence as one of the most characteristic feature in the efflorescence and ascent of man. "In the application of the method of Non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however disproved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment."\textsuperscript{17} Gandhi highlights man by means of non-violence as an essential force truth-force or soul-force as Tolstoy would prefer to identify it. To Gandhi violence is the law of brutes while non-

\textsuperscript{16} Harijan, 29-8-1936
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 22-2-1942
violence is the rule of human beings. He absolutely differs with Darwinian principles of 'struggle of existence' and 'survival of the fittest'. Because in his books 'The Origin of Species' and 'The Descent of man', Charles Robert Darwin formulated the evolutionary hypothesis that man evolved for his animal ancestors by "natural selection" in the "Struggle for existence" and deduced the law of "Survival of the fittest".18 Gandhi also recognized that struggle for existence and violence are a fact of human life. It is true that man as an animal is violent but on the other hand it is also true that as a spirit man is non-violent. And the dignity of man is demands that man must overcome the claims of the matter or flesh by the claims of his spirit. The selfless service and sacrifice for mankind and acceptance of voluntary suffering are ways for it: "Man's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The Law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man."19 Gandhi said, "Non-violence is the law our species as violence is the law of the brutes."20 Violent man is self alienated man who does injury to his own being. Any one who objected to non-violence as the creed of the coward was reproached by Gandhi. He clarified, "Ahimsa is not the way of the brave to face death. He who perishes with sword in hand is no doubt brave but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is brave."21

19. Harijan, 29-6-35
20. Young India 9-3-1920
21. Young India 11-8-1928
As body represents physical power, man may sometimes be tempted to do himsa; but man's true nature consists in his Spiritual aspects. Man is not born to explore avenues to amass worldly riches. His ultimate goal is not less than the realization of God. Man is born with brute nature but he is born to realise who is seated in him and that particular privilege has made him man distinguishing him from other lower creatures. According to Gandhi non-violence or love is the ultimate principle of life. Because "if love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death...... If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his own personal life."²²

Gandhi was the first thinker who tried to bring about change of heart by means of non-violence from the individual to the social and political plane. Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha which is the way of non-violence, is based on the absolute freedom of the Soul to follow and abide by the truth one perceives and experiences. According to Gandhi, the principle of non-violence put to work as a positive force against untruth, evil, and destruction is called Satyagraha. It is the opposition of physical force with soul force. He wielded the weapon of non-violence not only against political wrongs but also in cases of economic, social and religious injustice.

²². M.K.Gandhi, Non-Violence in Peace and War, VoL.i 1962, P.130
Man is religious by nature. Religion is the expression of the permanent nature of man. The worship, belief in the soul, belief in God and quest for salvation are the characteristic form of human activity in religion. "Life without religion is life without principle, and life without principle is like a ship without a rudder." Gandhi's view of religion is highly practical. According to Gandhi man cannot live without dharma or religion, because it is sustaining force which gives us the principle of brotherhood. Religion is the expression of the permanent nature of man. It has the quality of purifying and elevating human nature. Religion is a principle of unification and harmonisation. According to Gandhi service to man is the only dharma. Because service to man is service to God only. The true religion of man is to serve humanity. As he says, "My creed is service to God and therefore of humanity." To serve without desire is to favour not others, but ourselves, even as in discharging a debt we serve only ourselves, lighten our burden and fulfil our duty. Again not only the good, but all of us are found to place our resources at the disposal of humanity. The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast. "Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow man." 

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24. Young India, 23-10-1924
25. M.K. Gandhi from Yervada Mandir, P.81
By religion Gandhi means self-realization. The only one reality which is God is nothing else but truth and non-violence is the means of realizing him. Belief in one God is the corner stone of all religions. According to Gandhi God can never be realised by one who is not pure at heart. Identification with God or man is impossible without self purification. Moral life is necessary for spiritual purification. He believed in the inherent goodness of human nature. Man can lead a moral life by controlling his desires and impulses with the guidance of conscience and reason. Without moral basis and development there cannot be any spiritual growth. God realisation is the highest good of man and that is only possible by truth, because he identifies God with truth and finally reaches the affirmation, 'truth is God'. Gandhi does not worship God as a human being. He used the name 'Rama' to describe his 'God' the eternal, unborn, the one without second. Thus by 'Ramarajya' he meant the kingdom of God (i.e. truth) on the earth. He says, "My Rama is not historical Rama. He is eternal the unborn and one without second, Him alone I worship." 27

As a social being man has some particular qualities or social nature, which makes man a social creature. To find out these qualities we can consider Makenzie's triple aspects of human life. These are- a vegetative aspect, an animal aspect and human aspect.

27. Harijan, 4-4-1946
The vegetative aspect has helped man to become a social creature. In some respects animal life (included man) resembles the life of plants. Men grow like trees and reproduces their species as plants do. Men as animals and plants resemble in their peculiar bodily structure and in the means they adopt to fulfil their respective ends. But the plants have no power to protest against the circumstances in which they are rooted and they cannot communicate among themselves. Moreover, the human infant, is completely dependent on its parents for some time after its birth but in the case of plants we do not find this phenomenon. In other respects also man's life is higher and more complex.

Besides the vegetative aspect, the animal aspects has also made man a social creature. Like animals, man has also instincts, emotions etc. Man shares with lower animals the capability of locomotion, sensitiveness to surroundings, instinctive tendencies to action. The protection of the helpless for a certain period of time, the storing of food and protection of life from the dangers can be done effectively by co-operative action only. There are facts more definitely connected with animal nature that make some form of association quite natural for man. In human life both co-operation and competition, both strife and love, help to give rise to social unity. For the struggle against nature man had to seek co-operation of other beings.

Besides the above two aspects there is another man's own peculiar aspect which has given man a distinctive mark to his social life.
Man is not only an animal, he is rational. His actions are controlled by reason. The accumulation of knowledge helps man in adapting himself to different situations. This is impossible without the co-operation of other human beings. The parents have to teach the (helpless) child to think and to apply thought in the guidance of conduct. The act requires a longer and more intimate association between the child and the parents. Thus not only the unity but also the diversities found in human societies have led us to believe that some form of association is natural in man.

Man for Gandhi is not a compartmental being. He is a harmonious combination of all the elements which constitute his wholeness. So he cannot do right in one department of life while he is occupied in doing wrong in another department. According to Gandhi, social betterment depends upon individual efforts for self-purification. He always emphasises personal purification and says that it is possible to conquer evil by prolonged Sadhana. Gandhi was influenced by Tolstoy and Thoreau who gave importance to individual and his capability of changing society. The influence of the Bible and the Gita also led him to believe in the importance of the individual. Gandhi was a great fighter for social reforms but he believed that social reforms would become effective only when the individual reforms himself.

Since Gandhi believes in the presence of God in man, he refuses to suspect human nature. It is bound to respond to any noble and friendly action. So Gandhi rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of
human nature. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music. Soul power can prove effective only if it is sincerely given a chance. Gandhi never advocates the idea of closed society, where human love perishes and man is isolated and frustrated. According to him man requires a society where everybody will freely be drawn to everybody because all are essentially spiritual. Man is a social being who is in search of peace, justice, harmony and happiness throughout the ages. He cannot live without society. Gandhi wanted a classless society, where every individual got equal opportunity for his or her all-round developed. This he called Sarvodaya Samaj, in which love, non-violence, truth and justice and 'service to all' would be the ideal of each citizen.

Gandhi's concept of man has a similarity with Marxian concept of Man. An ardent quest for freedom from alienation is common to Gandhi and Marx. But the frame work of Marxian concept of alienation is different from the Gandhian concept. The goal of Gandhi and Marx is to liberate man from social, political and economic bondage and to create exploitation free society. But according to Marx, Man is a natural social being having no transcendental essence in him. This non-recognition of the spiritual dimension of human existence distinguishes Marx from Gandhi.

Though the origin of the individual human body is a fairly well understood biological process, but for Gandhi, Man is a multi-dimensional being and not merely a biological creature. He is man- in-
society-social being who is in search of peace, justice, harmony and happiness throughout the ages. He cannot live without society. Man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic, political and social life. He is the foundation, the end and the subject matter of all institutions through which social life is carried on. Gandhi’s belief in a total man is expressed as, "Man is neither a mere intellect nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man."  

Gandhi considered man as a spiritual creation of God. Man is always superior to the brute creation from the standpoint of his moral instincts and moral institutions. According to Gandhi though human nature is filled with allurements which always attract us towards the outward claims and achievements. Nevertheless the deeper individuality of man struggles to choose the upward course.

Man has also ultimate ends to development of human personality, the freedom, and self-realisation of man. Things and institutions are not ends in him but only the means to serve man.

In conclusion, we can make the affirmation that man is intelligent, free, spiritual and personal by his nature, comprehends in himself all the values of created things and transcends them. Man as the natural summit of the world is the immediate end of creation, the key for

28. Harijan, 8-5-1937

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its interpretation. Gandhi's view on human nature is bound up with certain metaphysical and moral principles. He takes into account not only man's physical behaviour but also his real nature, his true self, and the spiritual element in him. Gandhi was not only concerned with human nature as it is but also told us how man can train and mould his nature so as to become what he is capable of becoming.

According to Gandhi human nature is a curious mixture of the real essence. The real individual is an immortal spiritual entity. Hence man can be said to be a divine spark and the citizen of the moral kingdom of ends and not a mere mechanical and organic aggregation of physical forces and chemical element. He had a sense of spiritual self-consciousness, moral internality. To be man is to be divine. This essentially means that there is divinity in man and this is to be in the union with all activities and affairs of mankind. As an eternal apostle of Truth, Beauty and Goodness in man, Gandhi emphasises upon the efflorescence of inherent divinity in man, because he believes the essence of man is the essence of God. Gandhi identifies man as the truest embodiment of God. He honours man as man embodied in God-Naranarayana, the Divine. Man-homo sapiens-who is the best creation of God, represents God in all his attributes.

Gandhi's conception of the relationship between the material and the spiritual is not opposed to that of modern science. As Max Planck says, "I believe life is a part of some greater life that we cannot
understand...I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness."29 Sir James Jeans says, "the Universe begins to look more like a Great Thought than a Great Machine. Mind no longer appears as an Accidental Intruder into the Realms of Matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the Creator and Governor of the Realms of Matter."30 Thus the physicist's viewpoint may well bridge the gap between Science and Religion. As Harlow Shapley says, "......we can argue that this universe is multi-dimensional - not simply a space-time scheme. A possible dimension that might require additional natural laws is Consciousness, another is Life."31 In course of the Scientific investigation it is increasingly evident in the recent years that no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between living and non-living systems. This shows that there is an all pervading living force in the universe and that matter is spiritual and spirit material. Gandhi aptly observes, ".........there is orderliness in the universe, there is unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind Law; for no blind Law can govern the conduct of living beings, and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J.C.Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and Law-giver are one."32

29. J.W.N. Sullivan, Contemporary Mind, PP 151-2
31. Harlow Shapley, Of Stars and Men, P.120
32. M.K.Gandhi, Hindu dharma, P.57
Hence Gandhi could not accept the Marxian view that mind is a reflection of matter. He observed, "The Marxists regard thought, as it were, 'a secretion of the brain' and the mind 'a reflex of the material environment'. I cannot accept that. Above and beyond both matter and mind is He." Gandhi further remarked, "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates." While Marxism relied on the unlimitedness of the sum total of human knowledge and on the endless scientific discovery, Gandhi had a firm conviction about the limited nature of human knowledge and the limitless nature of the universe. He declared, "The human mind is a limited thing and you have to labour under limitations when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp." "To realise Perfect Truth is impossible so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame. We can only visualize it in our imagination.........That is why in the last resort we must depend on faith." Thus while Marx intended to produce a scientific man, Gandhi was trying to transform that very scientific man into a spiritual one. As Radhakrishnan observes, "By the practice of spiritual exercise, by fast and prayers, he (Gandhi) aimed at the production of a new type of human being, fearless, greedless and hateless. Man is still evolving." Gandhi

33. Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi-the Last Phase, Vol.II, P.137
34. N.K.Bose (ed). Selections from Gandhi, P.20
35. Alexander Spirkin, Dialectical Materialism, P.192
36. M.K.Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, P.60
37. Ibid., P.223
38. S.Radhakrishnan and others (Eds) Mahatma Gandhi: 100 years, P.3
viewed man in his wholeness. Man as a whole is making progress from age to age and from generation to generation. As he said, "I believe that the Sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the Law of love." So man is not a 'lost' creature. He is ever capable of self-development.

For Gandhi, "the individual is the one supreme consideration." His distrust of the state power, machine and all institutions is a consequence of his belief in the supremacy of the individual. He placed man above all the institutions that are made by man. He believed that "man is superior to the system he propounded." For this reason he was in favour of attacking or destroying a bad system rather than its author. His target of attack was always the system that is evil, but not the man behind that system. Therefore, he pleaded for the destruction of the capitalist system, but not the capitalists.

For Gandhi, no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption. Every individual must be regarded as an end and none as a means. The imperfections of man in the present state would not negate the future possibility of his development to perfection. This optimistic view of human perfectibility is the basis of his philosophy of non-violence. Asserting his view of regeneration of man, Gandhi wrote, "In the

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39. Young India, 11.8.1940
40. Ibid., 13.11.1924
41. Ibid., 13.7.1921
application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment."42 Gandhi was not only concerned with man's being, but also with his becoming. He believed in the inherent goodness of man. Human capacity for improvement implies that mutual conflict cannot be regarded as the dominant principle of human life. For this reason Gandhi believed that 'class war' is superfluous and unnecessary. He said, "I refuse to suspect human nature."43 He pleaded more for human effort than its successful result. As an idealist Gandhi proclaimed, "...satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory."44 Thus he rejected all the static conceptions of man and human nature.

Gandhi's belief is human perfectibility, in the final analysis, is based upon his metaphysical belief in the life after death or rebirth. Time is so consideration for him. If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time cycle. Even the slightest effort of an individual towards perfection cannot be wasted as it gives its results in the next birth. Referring to his belief in rebirth, Gandhi said, "I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted."45 Thus Gandhi's faith in human

42. Harijan, 22-2-1942
43. Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol.18, P.118
44. Young India, 9-3-1922
perfection is not merely based on a moral conviction but it is ultimately based upon his metaphysical beliefs.

Gandhi's theory of individual reformation can only be understood in the light of his concept of man. Since he inherited the traditions of Indian idealistic philosophy which recognises the primacy of spirit over matter, his approach was indeed moral transformation of the individual heart which is the basis of all social and political dynamics. But his conception of morally regenerated individual is not that of an isolated individual from society nor is an abstract conceptual category from the organic whole. He is a social individual, striving for perfection along with his fellow social beings. Man for Gandhi, is an all-embracing and all-encompassing individual with endless potentialities and aspirations. As he asserts, "Man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in another department life is one indivisible whole."\textsuperscript{46} Man is never a compartmental animal. He is a harmonious combination of all the elements which constitute his wholeness. According to Gandhi, "Man is neither a mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or the soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man."\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46} Young India, 27-1-1927
\textsuperscript{47} Harijan, 8-5-1937
Gandhi believes in the evolutionary progress of man. History is the saga of man's striving to discover his humanity, which is but a reflection of the Supreme. Gandhi shares the Hindu belief in the identity of man within his innermost being with the transcendent reality. Mere man (Nara) strives to become a cosmic archetype (Narottama) finally merging into the Deity (Nārāyana). History is not always occupied with the here and now but the transformation of man into a hero of immutable goodness. Thus Gandhian view of history is hopeful of man as it has ethical overtones. Man qua man will ever remain imperfect but again, as man, with always strive for perfection. "Man cannot be at peace with himself till he has becomes like unto God." 48

48. Young India, 20-11-1928