CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUDING REMARKS

The struggle for power and wealth has become the defining features of present day human civilization. The same lust for power and material possessions have resulted in innumerable wars and bloodshed. From times immemorial, we have noticed that the practice of violence with a view to resolving conflicts has led to death of millions, homelessness and destitution of millions and in the process leading to millions of war widows and orphans as well. This has been exemplified to us in recent years by the use of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, use of violent methods to establish peace in Iraq, curbing of terrorism in Afghanistan, to mention just a few cases.

Throughout history, different scriptures, religious leaders, mystics and visionaries have laid great emphasis on non-violence. Also its positive impact on the society can easily be noticed. All religions consider life to be sacred and therefore, ask us to renounce violence. Non-violence or *Ahimsa* finds a prominent place in the essential virtues of the *Upanishad* and the other Holy Books. In the *Ramayana*, Rama embodies the concept of non-violence and the *Mahabharata* shows us how violence can never lead to good of anybody and always ends up in death and destruction. The concept of *Anashakti* or selflessness in the *Bhagavad-Gita* teaches us to practice non-violence and in Jaina philosophy or Artha-Darshan, *ahimsa* is the cardinal percept. The Middle Path of Buddhism, Christ’s Sermon on the Mount and Qur’anic virtues of love, tolerance and forbearance advocate the inculcation of this invaluable virtue and use of weapon of non-violent action. Islam teaches that peace is the best means to sort out conflicts as it
neither causes social disturbance nor leads to any loss of life and property. Thus, though all religions follow different practices and course of worship all of them embody the message of peace, love and brotherhood.

Philosophers like al-Ghazzali have pointed out that all human beings are one since their creator that is God is one. Almost all the great religious leaders and philosophers held that, the fellow feeling one has for other human being owing to one’s love for God is the highest form of worship. Asoka’s *Dhamma*, Akbar’s *Deen-i-Ilaahi*, Rumi’s *Masnawis*, Sufi philosophies of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, *Sulh i- kul* (peace with all), Tolstoy’s *Christian Anarchism*, Iqbal’s *Naya Shivala* are all but about the virtue of love and non-violence and its practical significance. The same value of love is found dominating in the teachings of Tagore, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, M.N Roy, Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Dara Shikoh, Lao Tse etc. Love for them is a source of joy since through love one begins to identify oneself with the object of love. Love accordingly, further consists of the values of self-detachment and self-sacrifice. Tolstoy through his work *War and Peace* shows that violence causes the degeneration of essential moral values in man. These ideals of love and tolerance had their significance in the past and will bear the same in the future even as it may be characterized by violence and terrorism.

Conflict is and will remain a part of human civilization but the need is to resolve it through non-violent methods if human civilization is to prosper. The use of non-violent action breaks the vicious cycle of violence. It brings an end to the atmosphere of distrust, hatred and revenge. Suffering, an inevitable aspect of non-violence not only curbs violence but also transforms the adversary. Love and tolerance the two inseparable features of non-violent action creates an atmosphere of trust and
brotherhood which helps to bind the entire humanity together irrespective of differences of faith, or points of view, or caste, creed and colour etc. Non-violence not only has a universal application but results in the development of individual character as well. It gives one the strength to meet injustice and violence in every sphere of life.

The methods of non-violent action include protest and persuasion, non-co-operation, and civil disobedience, which all are aimed at bringing about a positive change without inflicting harm on others. Non-cooperation involves a deliberate withdrawal of cooperation. While civil disobedience has its origin in the struggle to free America from slavery through non-violent means by Thoreau, the idea of civil disobedience given by Thoreau is based by the notion that their should be maximum cooperation among people and political institutions when it promotes good and non-cooperation when it leads to evil. The method of protest and persuasion includes parades, public meetings, open discussions and the like, which all aim at bringing about a positive change and try to induce in the oppressed masses the feeling to get justice for themselves. Apart from the methods of non-violent action, strategy is the next object of prime importance in non-violence. Strategy plays a very pivotal role for a non-violent action to be successful. For the real success of non-violent action a proper strategy or planning needs to be worked out giving a lot of care in choosing the issues, plans, time, and methods of action. The absence of this very strategy may result in a complete failure of non-violent action apart from inducing more suffering on the part of the non-violent actionist. The philosophy behind non-violent action is to prepare human mind to accept that for the better socio-political order peace, goodwill, and non-violence play a significant
role and these are intrinsic values which every rational being should exercise in any adverse situation.

It is a known fact that efforts to remove violence from personal life forms an inevitable primary step to the establishment of genuine democracy and world peace. Man being born free and created equal by God should not be under control of laws that are not in accordance with his consent. This philosophy forms the basis of modern democracy. Democracy is further based on the notion that the State has a human origin, created to work for the betterment of human beings. This makes it to conclude that Kings and Monarchs do not possess any divine right and people’s consent is of vital importance. However, the will of the people in democracy should be the ‘General Will’ (as given by Rousseau) which represents the higher self of individual. Such a democracy based on General Will would work for public welfare and common good. Under democracy, people follow laws which they themselves have made and this makes democracy very distinct from other forms of government. Among the different forms of government, democracy is the one, which is free from the flaws of tyranny and exploitation which are the marked features of both monarchy and aristocracy.

In tracing the rise and development of this important political concept, we come to an important conclusion that in any form of government that has existed from the past to the present age, consent of the people has played an important role in its survival. That is to say even if a king ruled a nation he needed the support of the people for proper functioning in his regime. Even if monarchy forms a marked feature of the past ages it never was in an absolute form and that a form of democracy did exist in the past ages though not in a pure form. This can be illustrated by
quoting few examples from the history taken from the both the West and the East. In Homer’s time, kings needed the support of general body of free men to take decisions; similarly in India, Indo-Aryans carried on their administration through sabha and samiti which were governed roughly on democratic principles. In Islam, too democracy was seen as an important feature from the time of the Prophet Mohammad (S), though democracy and its compatibility with Islam has been a topic of debate for quite a long time. The notion of democracy as we find it presently evolved in the West and soon spread to East through colonization and other processes. This Western notion first got adopted and later adapted in the Islamic world and India as well.

Democracy as a form of government includes the nature of its franchise, the character of electoral system and further the relation between the government and the people, existing in a nation. As a form of government it needs a sense of public responsibility, a vigilant and truly interested public for its true success. Education helps to make sound public opinion and makes people reasonable. Democracy cannot be viewed in the narrow sense of merely a form of government. It has a philosophical dimension to it too. It is interpreted in terms of a kind of faith, on humanistic and philanthropic aspects. It includes certain essential social, economic and ethical values. In a society, there does not exist the sameness of opinion, but differences in status, class and religion do exist. Owing to these basic differences present in a society, democracy stresses upon the values of forbearance, mutual respect, tolerance and equality to be inculcated and imbibed in the people living together and exercising ethical principles which are essential for true triumph of democracy. It lays considerable importance on individuals and works for the welfare of all the
members of society. It believes in the values of freedom, equality and brotherhood. It gives one the freedom of speech, press, criticism, organization, the right to practice one’s religion, to choose one’s profession etc. It nurtures the value of equality giving each the right to use his ability to the fullest. Democracy with this essential feature goes against the evil practices of slavery, apartheid, untouchability and other such discriminations. Fraternity or brotherhood forms one of the intrinsic faiths of a democratic set-up. It inculcates in one the spirit to work in association with a view to achieving common welfare. This further incorporates the values of selfless devotion, joint efforts and stresses more on duties than on rights. Individual freedom on which democracy lays considerable stress may at times curb the freedom of others. Democracy here emphasizes the need to give others the same space and opportunity to flourish as one demands for oneself.

Democracy though has its own limitations, yet it is the only means which can help people to form government of their choice with the help of their franchise to work for their upliftment and development in various walks of life. The world today, with its numerous diversions, socio-economic problems or scientific and industrial advancement and various others complexities, needs a faith in essential values for survival of democracy and to prevent the misuse of power. As discussed in the project that democracy not only curbs the concentration of power in few hands but also minimizes the misuse of power and further believes in the moral values of love, justice and equality which are all necessary for the modern world to survive.

Indian culture with its faith in supreme power, with its glorious past in which saints and seers even from the lowest strata of society could gain
respect and reverence, with its immortal values of love, compromise, tolerance and fortitude, vehemently supports the notion of democracy. Gandhi viewed democracy against the backdrop of spirituality. He closely linked it to the idea of non-violence and *ahimsa*. He believed that the essential values that religions teach us should be inculcated in democracy. For him, true democracy was synonymous with self-control and self-purification. The values that Gandhi advocated to be imbibed will orientate individuals in a democratic set-up to work for the benefit of the society on a whole rather than for self-centered motives.

The basic values and virtues on which democracy is based, necessitate that non-violence forms an essential requisite for its functioning. To achieve perfect democracy, perfect non-violence is needed. A State whose means are tainted with violence can never remain democratic in nature. Both non-violence and democracy share the same basic values of equality, love, selflessness, sympathy, mutual tolerance, liberty, brotherhood etc. The materialism of today has weakened our value system and a feeling of unity and solidarity are essentially needed for democracy to prevail and be really successful. The need is a revival of faith in the essential values of religion, principles of morality and the values of non-violence.

The prominent question that remains often unanswered and even sometimes unheeded to, is the fact that democracy though has a long tradition and by twentieth century has got fully evolved, yet democracy in many countries is facing ultimate crisis. Democracy today at many places, still exists as a mere political term has lost its true spirit. With time and development though changes have become evident in social and political systems; the mindset, the very thinking of people has however, not
changed. The value system—which has degenerated and has been nullified owing to material progress and its evil consequences, needs to be revived along with a revival of religious faith, which we try to stress through this work. In order to achieve true democracy and all that it stands for, religio-ethical values need to be inculcated lest democracy will remain a mere illusion, a distant dream and will never be converted to reality.

India, being such a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious country, needs the essential values of non-violence and a true democratic set-up for its proper development and very survival. Narrow-mindedness and feelings of casteism, communalism, regionalism, and biased attitude have no place in the present world scenario.

Sovereignty and democracy are related to one another, both being important concepts of political philosophy. The concept of popular sovereignty is especially bound up with concept of democracy since in democracy the ultimate authority rests in the masses and that is what popular sovereignty too emphasizes upon.

As we have analyzed through this important political concept we came to an understanding that pure for absolute sovereignty never existed in the past nor can it have a place in the future. Any ruler, even a monarch, has his power limited by divine laws, culture and popular will of the masses. He cannot out-rightly go against the will of the masses and customs of society lest his rule will perish with time. Among the various theories of sovereignty from Monistic, Pluralistic, Sovereignty of reason etc. sovereignty of the people or popular sovereignty is the best suited to contemporary world and its needs. This concept of popular sovereignty gives ultimate authority to people and considers the rulers or representatives as the mere agents of people carrying out their assigned
duties. It is a worth noting fact that sovereignty in its absolute form either
given to a monarch or people has very negative consequences and often
ends up in tyranny whether of individual or tyranny of the majority.
Therefore, a constant need of vigilance and check is of utmost importance.

Islam as a religion considers that God is the real sovereign whose
authority is channalized through the agency of man. These representatives,
who are bestowed with the right to carry on the authority, are bound up by
a number of responsibilities and duties. The presence of morality in Islamic
concept of Sovereignty is found lacking in its western notion and needs to
be essentially inculcated so that the use of power may not curb others right
or leads to their oppression.

Sovereignty provides us with a stable society, one where we have a
recognized source of power which can be held responsible for an action.
The basic principles on which sovereignty is based aims at establishing
peace and providing security to the people. Democracy, as we know, needs
accountability and representation, which is hampered by external
intervention, which curbs the external sovereignty of a nation. So, for
democracy to prevail, some basic attributes of sovereignty that is internal
and external sovereignty need to be firmly established.

In our present work after having traced the notion of non-violent
action and its inseparable association with democracy and sovereignty, we
came to a definite conclusion that non-violence and its values of love,
forbearance, tolerance, sympathy, compassion, equality etc. have been
advocated from times immemorial and all this finds an important place in
other political notions of democracy. Gandhi’s contribution is irrefutably
one of the greatest in the promotion of non-violent culture. Gandhi used the
concept of non-violence for the first time for political purposes leaving an immortal impression on political philosophy.

Gandhi had a firm faith in the potentialities of non-violent action and believed that non-violence stands as something inevitable for the reformation of politics. He rightly asserted that non-violence is mightier than the mightiest weapon of mass destruction as it not only resolves the conflict but also helps to transform evil into good. This all is achieved without any bloodshed or even malice and hatred against the opponent.

Amidst the innumerable contributions of Gandhi from his campaign of self-reliance to his struggle to remove social discrimination in form of untouchability and apartheid, Satyagraha stands as the greatest one. He used this technique for the first time to resist the racial discrimination in South Africa and later on at various important occasions throughout Indian struggle for freedom. Truth, non-violence and self-suffering are the important aspects of Gandhian Satyagraha. Satyagraha for Gandhi meant adherence to truth and truth to him signified God. He was opposed to use of violence in any situation and self-suffering was the means to convert the opponent by arousing in him a sense of justice. It entails the values of openness since non-violence itself being based on truth there is no place for deception or conspiracy. Gandhian non-violence actionists not only deny to hate but go a step ahead and even love their adversaries. Every action is carried out with the least sense of malice, which helps to create a positive environment.

Satyagraha as a weapon aimed at fighting injustice in the society through non-violent means only resolves conflict to its very root but also acts as a means to achieve greater insight into truth. Gandhi used it to fight for the rights of untouchables in 1924. This Satyagraha was based on the
truth that every human being has equal right be he from the lower strata of society or higher. The other notable examples are salt Satyagraha, Bardoli Satyagraha, and Satyagraha against Rowlatt Bills to mention a few.

Satyagraha being essentially non-violent in nature has enormous power. It finds its justification not only in morals but also has an important place in Holy Scriptures. In this contemporary world with its advancement in science and technology, where use of modern weapons can destroy the entire humanity in few minutes’ non-violence and its values of tolerance and understanding are indispensable for survival. Gandhi has rightly exclaimed that the concept of an eye for an eye would end up making the whole world blind.

The world today is swept with the ferocious wind of violence. This storm is a product of centuries of brutal practices, further crowned by a century of inhuman industrialization, materialistic system of economics where soul is given no importance, and values of love and sympathy hold no place. The world today is marked with hypocrisy and cruelty towards fellow beings. We need to recognize this void present in our civilization and try to do away with it through the inviolable weapon of non-violence. Thus, it will not be wrong to conclude that, today’s world with its innumerable problems non-violent action serves to be a boon, one that stands out as an effective and promising weapon to fight evil and injustice and to establish an atmosphere of love and brotherhood.

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