CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY IN GANDHI:

AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

"I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realisation of my own limitations."

M.K. GANDHI

Selections from Gandhi, p.214.
Human nature is such that vices are almost inseparable from virtues. When a man's actions are dominated by vices, disharmony and indiscipline result. This can be countered only by actions rooted in the virtuous nature of man. This process, however, has to be an ongoing one. Gandhi has been an exemplary in this. He was different from other great men, in the sense that he did not conceal his weaknesses but overcame them through disciplined application. His personality was exceptional on the one hand, and on the other he blazed a trail which even the common man could emulate.

This universal leader had a singular passion to see the all-pervading Truth face to face and to seek its fulfilment in the very midst of society. Gandhi believed that in order "to see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creations as oneself!" through actions based on truth and non-violence that are reflections of the cosmic law. This moral law is a basis for development since it provides a goal which human beings can constantly strive for. "A principle is a principle and in no case can it be watered down because of our incapacity to live it in practice." Gandhi believed that one should continually strive for the highest expression of the moral law in daily life for transforming oneself.

Transformation of personality is the highest form of development where the 'style' of life of the person will be changed due to the
changes in his attitudes. By the term transformation Aurobindo means generally "a change of lower human nature into the nature of the 'innost and highest self of man i.e., psychic being and jivatman." 3 This change is evident "in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within." 4 Hence transformation presupposes development. Development here is not merely physical and psychological growth of the different stages of one's life, but the development in its three dimensions - horizontal, vertical and abyssal.

Article 1

GANDHI'S VISION OF TRANSFORMATION

In the Gandhian view personal development and transformation and the concern for others that finds its expression through 'actions of love' are inter-related. These 'expressions of love', should centre on the needs of others. Gandhi gave prime importance to this as a means to the transformation of personality. He believed that there was no point in increasing his personal wants beyond a certain limit as unrestrained wants become more a hindrance than an advantage to any individual. Gandhi said:

A thing, if not stolen, should be considered as stolen if one continues to enjoy its possession without needing it any longer. To possess means to provide for the future. But he who searches after truth, he who follows the law of love, cannot have anything for the morrow. 5

To limit his needs to the minimum for the sake of others Gandhi had to impose on himself many restrictions. The motive behind these was the ardent desire to serve humanity as best as he could. "The ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems
to be a delusion and a snare. A man must arrange his physical and cultural circumstances so that they may not hinder him in his service of the humanity.\(^6\) So the climax of the process of development, for Gandhi, was the continuous giving of self to others. This enjoined upon him a life of self-discipline. This self-discipline, the hallmark of Gandhi's character, was the pedagogy, he applied in the process of transformation.

1. **Self-discipline: Gandhi's pedagogy of transformation**

The term 'discipline' comes from the Latin word "disciplina" which means "teaching" or "instruction."\(^7\) It helps one to gain self-control and to direct oneself so that one may be able to make wise decisions on one's own responsibility. Hence self-discipline is an important aspect in the process of development of a personal value system. This involves three related aspects of self-control — the ability to resist temptations, the ability to tolerate delay of gratification and the imposing of standards of achievement upon oneself.\(^8\)

Self-discipline is an ongoing process that protects one from the shortcomings of one's activities and from the pitfalls in day-to-day life. Gandhi said: "It is discipline and restraint that separates us from the brute. If we will be men walking with our heads erect and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint."\(^9\)

The personality of Gandhi that has emerged over the years is the result of years of rigorous self-discipline and intensive
self-training. He writes: "I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger and as heat conserved is transmuted into a power which can move the world."\textsuperscript{10} This training of his self, reinforced the belief that in the universe there is nothing that is totally evil or totally good. This belief is abetted by continuous efforts of self-discipline which involved humility, non-violence, renunciation, self-sacrifice and compassion.\textsuperscript{11}

Gandhi began to cull truth from untruth by embracing humility. Recognition of the distinction between Absolute and relative truth, realization of the need for constant experimentation and evaluation of one's own perception of truth, was considered by him as a form of self-discipline. He wrote: "All that I can in true humility present to you is that truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourselves to a zero."\textsuperscript{12} This type of self-discipline tends to produce a spirit of tolerance and compassion. "...no one has right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth."\textsuperscript{13} Usually "We are long-sighted regarding other people's faults."\textsuperscript{14} But what is essential is self-correction with tolerance, paving the way for a spirit of renunciation and self-sacrifice as the basis for non-violent actions.

As a condition of non-violent action the will has to be non-violent first, since all actions are rooted in the mind. Gandhi advocated the controlling of the mind through self-discipline. The personal strategy of Gandhi for self-control is to shed all types of fears by developing the quality of fearlessness embracing the path of self-discipline. For Gandhi, fearlessness implies freedom from all fear, including fear of
pain, disease, dispossession, or death. In order to develop this quality of fearlessness one has to be non-attached. Gandhi said, "All these are not ours but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours." If one could recognise this truth, one can get interested in those objects "...not as proprietors but only as trustees."17

Fearlessness also implies bravery. Gandhi believed that bravery was more a mental state than a function of physical power. His conception of bravery rejected arrogance and aggressiveness and was based on tranquility with its source of faith in God. The notion of bravery is central to Gandhi's creed of non-violence which involves the active pursuit of truth. The road leading to Truth according to Gandhi. "is for the brave, never for the cowardly!" He called such practices of the brave in pursuit of Truth as Satyagraha which connotes 'Truth-Force' or 'Soul-Force.' Satyagraha, the dynamic expression of non-violent action demands much more self-discipline than the discipline of the ordinary soldier and involves the recasting of one's value system.

According to Gandhi, any individual, however ignorant or weak, can begin the ascent towards truth through the practice of non-violent actions. For the continuous training of self, he professed no complex formulas or sectarian dogmas but instead hailed the simple process of self-correction to be the basis for the development of personality. Thus the process of transformation of personality is aided and abetted by the continuous efforts of self-discipline. involving humility, compassion, tolerance, self-correction, self-sacrifice, non-violence and renunciation.
In order to effect this Gandhi adopted various techniques for self-discipline.

1.1. **Different techniques for self-discipline**

Prayer, fasting, confession, naturopathy etc. are some techniques used by Gandhi to promote self-discipline.

a) **Prayer**

It is a realisation of one's intimate unity with the Universal Self. Gandhi considers prayer as a tool of action for self-discipline. It is a powerful weapon to cut out evil habits. It is also "an absolute shield and protection against evils." 

According to Gandhi prayer "is yearning from within which expresses itself in every word, every act, nay, every thought of man." It is a search and an urge to change what we feel incomplete in ourselves. Gandhi claimed:

> I am not a man of learning but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Every one is law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trod by the ancient teachers....Let every one try and find that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared. 

He said: "No act of mine is done without prayer." Prayer was the power house from which Gandhi drew his indefatigable energy. He also knew and experienced the electric impact of prayer upon the masses. So he introduced congregational and mass prayer meetings.

The secret of Gandhi's influence became evident at his prayer
meetings. One such instance was described by Edmond Taylor in the book 'Profiles of Gandhi'. He said: "It was my first and probably my last chance to see the non-violent, vegetarian, chastity-practising George Washington of India, and I took advantage of it."  

He wrote that he was dumb-struck when

the familiar, bent, spectacled figure in the loin cloth, with a white home spun shawl thrown over his shoulder, appeared, surrounded by his close disciples...mounted a sort of dais decked with flowers, sat cross-legged on a cushion, and began silent meditation, while one of his disciples led the crowd in the singing of pleasantly monotonous hymns.

After the hymns he spoke softly, casually and intimately to the masses relating his experience of prayer to the day to day vicious circle of life. Prayer is a yearning of the soul to merge in the divine essence which can be attained through fasting.

b) Fasting

Fasting is the highest expression of prayer and of pure and loving heart. A genuine fast "cleanses body, mind and soul." It is an effective weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It is to be undertaken either for self-purification or self-restraint or for appealing to the better nature of the opposite party in reconsidering his stand and realizing his mistakes. It may be undertaken to check acts of violence, to remove bitterness or even to purify the political atmosphere. It, however, is to be employed only as a 'species of tyaga' and never as a method of exercising undue pressure on the opposite party. So there is distinction between the fastings of a satyagrahi and a duragrahi.
For Gandhi the observance of fasting was one of the best ways of listening to 'the Voice of God' within man. He said: "I know now more fully than ever that there is no prayer without fasting." He undertook his first fast in the Phoenix ashram, when he found some moral lapses among the inmates of the ashram. According to Gandhi "a person's strength of character is tested in fasting, moreover it leaves scope for changing one's mind, which is both proper and necessary." His fast at the ashram was for seven days and at the end of it he took a vow to have only a meal a day for a period of four and half months. He wrote about the effect of the fast: "My penance pained everybody, but it cleared the atmosphere. Everyone came to realise what a terrible thing it was to be sinful and the bond that bound me to the boys and girls became stronger and truer." The guilty felt ashamed and sincerely repented as they realised the suffering they had imposed on Gandhi. They grew in stature in their eyes and their love for him became deeper.

Apart from this, Gandhi used the technique of fasting against the practice of untouchability, official injustice, Hindu-Muslim riots, and other acts of violence. For him, 'fasting unto death' is the final weapon in the hands of a Satyagrahi. Gandhi is of the view that one should possess some personal experience of fasting for spiritual purification before undertaking a Satyagraha fast. He believed that this kind of means can be used only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. To those who complaint that fasting is equal to suicide, Gandhi replies: .... my fast being conditional was not a fast.
amounting to suicide, but it was a fast involving the greatest risk, but still a risk and no more."\textsuperscript{39} If sacrifice meant risking life, the greater the risk, the greater the sacrifice.

Fasting which subdue the flesh and confession that purifies the heart are means for achieving greater purification of the soul.\textsuperscript{40}

c) Confession

According to Gandhi by confessing an error as soon as it is discovered, one can purge it. The quality of confession plays an important role in purifying the heart for self-transformation. Gandhi said:

\begin{quote}
I have ever followed the maxim that one should not let the sun go down upon one's error without confessing it. No mortal is a proof against error. Danger consists in concealing one's error, in adding untruth to it in order to gloss it over.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

Gandhi believed that confession helps in developing moral strength. So whatever he did wrong in his life, he confessed. He held that "a clean confession combined with a promise never to commit the sin again, when offered before one who has the right to receive it, is the purest type of repentance."\textsuperscript{42}

Confession can be private or public. Private confession is acknowledging to oneself the sins and errors committed by oneself. Gandhi's life consists of a series of such private acknowledgements. When he wrote out the confession of stealing a bit of gold out of his brother's armlet\textsuperscript{43} to his father and asked for his forgiveness he had taken the first step in his long and arduous journey towards the status
of a Mahatma. He confessed also about his powerful carnal lust which came in his way of attending his father in his last moments. He believed that deceiving one's father or mother is worse than eating meat. Each confession was for him a step in purifying the self and leading to self-discipline. Gandhi recalled repeatedly in later life the cleansing effect of his confessions and the peace they had given him.

Public confession is an acid test of inward truth and only the truly great have the courage to venture into it. The primary conditions for this are that it should be purely voluntary and the penitent should make every effort to rectify the error.

Gandhi put his faith to the test when violence erupted during the millworker's strike at Ahemadabad, killing a police sergeant. The crowd had gone berserk with violence. He made a fervent appeal for peace. He wanted the guilty to voluntarily confess their crimes. But there was no response. Gandhi realised with a pang that the masses were not ripe for a truly non-violent revolution. He suspended the mass satyagraha and made a public confession of the "Himalayan blunder" he had committed. He immediately set about teaching the people the true meaning of Satyagraha and the importance of confession of mistakes for self-purification.

d) Dietetics and Nature cure

As a means for self-discipline Gandhi conducted many experiments for body purification with dietetics and nature cure. He was obsessed with esoteric ideas with regard to dietetics and nature cure. It was a part of his effort to achieve a closeness to nature which was, for him,
an expression of God who is the Truth. The book "Return to Nature" by Just convinced him of the healing power of nature. He believed that by naturopathy all ills of body and mind can be cured. He observed:

I believed that man has little need to drug himself; 999 cases out of thousand can be brought round by means of well-regulated, diet, water and earth treatment and similar household remedies. He who runs to the doctor for every ailment, and swallows all kinds of vegetables and mineral drugs, not only curtails his life but, by becoming the slave of his body instead of remaining its master, loses self-control and ceases to be a man.47

Gandhi believed that man was intended to be a vegetarian by nature. Complete fasting once a fortnight, and eating only once during winter days, were recommended by Gandhi.

After many experiments Gandhi came to the following conclusion:

Man need take no milk at all, beyond the mother's milk that he takes as a baby. His diet should consist of nothing but sunbaked fruits and nuts. He can secure enough nourishment both for the tissues and the nerves from fruits, like grapes and nuts like almonds. Restraint of the sexual and other passions becomes easy for a man who lives on such food. My co-workers and I have seen by experience that there is much truth in the Indian proverb that as a man eats, so shall he become.48

It was this firm conviction which led him to believe that for a seeker, restraint in diet is as essential as restraint in thought and speech. In order to attain the ultimate goal of seeing the Truth face to face Gandhi's personality underwent the process of transformation with its firm fixation on self-discipline buttressed by prayer, fasts and confessions, where conscience plays a very significant role.
2. **Conscience and the process of transformation**

In the process of transformation of personality conscience also plays a very crucial role. Conscience can be called the "axis of moral life" in as far as a person's moral life revolves around his conscience. It is the person's subjective source of moral experience and obligation. It guides the individual along the course of moral life. Both, a moral hero and a moral "wreck" would rely on their respective conscience to justify their conduct however contrasting the characteristics of those consciences may be. This points to the importance and complexity of conscience.

The word 'Conscience' comes from the Latin root 'Conscire' - to know. It literally means 'knowing with.' It is a function of the individual's personality as well as his social ambience. Conscience is the source of right and wrong and a force that deters people from doing socially or morally unacceptable things. A highly developed form of conscience includes the concept of God. As an observer of our most private thoughts, our conscience forces us to be moral in the eyes of God.

Conscience resembles a judgement seat, set up within a man's own consciousness; it can discern what is going on in his own consciousness. This enables a person to guide himself correctly if he wills. Hence with the help of his conscience, he can develop the power of control over his own physical, vital, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual energies. It is this area of self-culture in which man is not only different from other living species but also superior to them. Conscience thus is not inborn but a socially acquired trait.
It appears that even in the absence of other traits our sense of conscience makes us choose only moral options. These acts help in the development of common habitual attitudes with regard to social behaviour making a society moral.

To be conscientious, according to Gandhi, is to be prepared for ceaseless activity in the service of humanity, which is a service to God. The light within a man strengthens him to march ahead and march beyond. From this point of view, Gandhi unifies action with contemplation and worship in the form of service.

Gandhi strove continually to be the excellent man — the man reborn — who lives not in passivity but in unending and thrilling endeavour, guided by his conscience. Conscience functions in the development of self awareness that in turn is dependent upon taking towards one's self the attitudes, which one's associates take towards one. Hence every existence is an expression of consciousness.

2.1. The dimensions of self-expression of consciousness

Consciousness is an indivisible, homogeneous whole but for deeper understanding is arbitrarily divided into three dimensions — the dimension of self-consciousness, of silence and of meditation. These dimensions, though separate, interpenetrate one another.

a) Dimension of self-consciousness

The movement of thought leading to actions demands the formation of I-consciousness in man. This I-consciousness is a predominating factor at the early stage of development and one has to outgrow this stage in order to achieve a true transformation of the personality.
This growth is evidenced in the life situations of Gandhi. In his school life, Gandhi came into contact with boys of different religions. They were all convinced that the English were strong due to their meat-eating habits. It was due to the influence of Sheik Mehtab, Gandhi's friend that he resorted to meat eating like the English to become strong.\(^5\) But it was a deeply disturbing experience. In the nights he used to have nightmares of a living goat bleating inside him. But he bravely kept up because his I-consciousness convinced him that it was his duty to 'cure physical weakness and cowardice.\(^5\) With the compulsion of the I-consciousness Gandhi went on giving wrong information to his mother as he was not hungry enough to do full justice to the evening meal at home. Thus he was sticking on to untruth.\(^5\)

Another instance of the domination of I-consciousness is noted in his acquaintance with an old lady in England who took upon herself the task of match-making for young Gandhi.\(^5\) In England Indian students normally felt ashamed to reveal to their English counterparts that they were married. Gandhi was no exception. The old lady introduced him to prospective young ladies specially a young lady who stayed with her. Gandhi's I-consciousness persuaded him from telling the truth regarding his marital status.

b) Dimension of silence

From the stage of I-consciousness man graduates into the next stage - Dimension of silence. "In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness."\(^6\) In this stage one has an inner urge
to sit and contemplate his own thoughts without interfering in the flow, without identification and evaluation. This is the state of observation. When this state of observation is continued and sustained it becomes spontaneous leading to habits. Here all the perceptions and responses are born of spontaneity and non-duality. In this stage the psychological barriers spontaneously disintegrate without leaving any residue. Gandhi considered that 'silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man, and silence is necessary in order to surmount it.'

The instance in the life of Gandhi, where he practised meat-eating and adherence to untruth was further tested in the dimension of silence of his conscience. He looked at the situation objectively in this dimension which made him conscious that the practice was unethical. The conviction reflected in him in the form of nightmares and as the bleating of the living goat inside him to fulfil its basic need of the right to live. This experience also made him realise the unity of life of all living beings.

In the other instance already discussed Gandhi's conscience through the dimension of silence never allowed him to continue long with the canker of untruth. In this state the individual bestowed with absolute calmness is able to proceed into the next stage.

c) Dimension of meditation

The dimension of meditation is a state of consciousness where there is no motion, no vibration. "The realm of meditation is where there is neither awareness, nor the movement of the unconditioned energy."
A person who enters into this stage functions from the heart, the core, the centre of inspiration. He also absorbs from factual memory, since he becomes aware of the vast and unconditioned past. These two functions interact to bring about a revolution in the personality of the individual with its effect of a total mutation of the organism.

In this revolutionary dimension it is possible for the personality to grow and to live relating oneself with the whole universe maintaining freedom of initiative and human relationship. This meditative and austere way of living transforms the inner nature of the person forming a stable, strong character.

Gandhi, with his belief in the unity of life, identified the basic need of the goat to live in the depth of his conscience, through meditation. This identification forced him to stop meat eating for ever. This shows the mettle of the boy who was willing to obey the bid of his conscience and was bold enough to discard his previous judgement.

Later due to the intuitions of his conscience he told the truth to his mother. In this dimension, values of truth and love worked and thus change of value was brought about by the change of actions. This is the dynamics through which transformation of personality was effected in Gandhi.

The same dynamics was applied in the other instance also. Gandhi meditated calmly over his untruthfulness to the ladies and repented. This repentance took the form of a letter to the old lady explaining...
his marital status, which he kept a secret. In the dimension of self-consciousness one becomes aware, as Gandhi did, of the unity of life with the disintegration of I-consciousness in the dimension of silence. One acts then from the centre of heart, as Gandhi did, embracing eternity in the dimension of meditation, reflecting the development in the abyssal dimension for the growth of one's personality.

3. **Methodology of self-transformation**

Gandhi's uniqueness was in combining theory with practice and pursuing a methodology of action centred on Truth with an experimental attitude. His 'yoga of action' demarcated him from other social philosophers and scientists who arrived at intellectual systems of thought and rarely advanced to action.

The commonly known yogas are Jnana yoga involving the discriminatory faculty and conscience, Bhakti yoga involving the emotive faculties and Karma yoga involving the will power and the power of action. All these yogas are integrally intertwined into karmayoga in the life of Gandhi.

The Sanskrit term 'karma' comes from the root 'Kr' meaning 'to act'. The usual meaning of karma yoga is work or action. Technically the word also means the effect of which our actions were the cause. The Gita gives a concise statement of this yoga.

"To work alone you are entitled, never to its fruit
Neither let your attachment be to non-action." (2.47)

Therefore karma yoga means nishkamakarma or desireless action with no thought of recompense or fear of any consequence. This non-attachment
will be the result of a deep attachment to God. So karma yoga can be said to be union with God in action or contemplative activity. One who practises karma yoga is a karma yogi. Gandhi was a model karma yogi.

3.1. Gandhi: A model karmayogi

The important characteristics of a karma yogi are exemplified in Gandhi.

a) Intimate union with God

An essential feature of a karma yogi is that he should have an experience of God leading to an intimate union with Him. A person acting in God-consciousness is a liberated person even if he is engaged in activities of the material world. Such a person is devoid of the false ego that he is the doer. Without God-consciousness one cannot actually purify the heart even with renunciation of action.

Gandhi was a karma yogi as his whole life was one of ceaseless activity inspired by the vision of Reality-God. This imparted a higher meaning to his diverse actions in the field of life - economic, political, social etc. According to him "a person's ultimate aim is the realization of God and all his activities, social and religious have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God." There can be no doubt that Gandhi's deep faith in God and constant communion with Him were the source of energy for his actions in the society and the secret of his charismatic influence.

b) Involvement in the world

A karma yogi regards the world as the arena for sharing the
fruits of his union with God rather than as a place of evil and illusions. He is not deterred by the problems and difficulties of the world; instead, they offer him an opportunity and a challenge. As Aurobindo says: "He is born as God's warrior to fight God's battle and to establish God's opulent kingdom here and not to fly away from the grim realities of life and its complex and baffling problems."  

Gandhi, the karma yogi, reaffirmed the message of the Gita regarding the relation between the world and religion in these words: "I have felt that the Gita teaches us that what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion." He entered into the deep meaning of religion and functioned in the world of politics as its salt and leaven.

Gandhi protested against the compartmentalisation of life into religion and politics, sacred and secular. According to him those who say religion has nothing to do with politics, do not know what religion really means. Gandhi worked hard to purify the political life by introducing monastic ideals into it. He told a group of missionaries that he could not lead a religious life unless he identified himself with humanity and he could achieve this, only by entering into politics. Gandhi said: "I do not know of any religion apart from activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities without which life would be a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing." 

With his deep religious perception Gandhi involved himself constantly in social and political struggles. He found the meaning of religion in those struggles.
c) Omnipresence of God

A true karma yogi sees God in everyone and in everything, and translates these perceptions into actions by worshipping the Lord, abiding in all beings. He worships living beings as the images of God viewing the hidden God present in them. This worship has to be performed not by the conventional orthodox style of offering incense, flowers and fruits, devotional songs but as the intangible offerings of love and service, help and guidance, kind words, thoughtful gifts etc.

It is really essential for a karma yogi to have a double vision - vision of God in all and vision of self in all. This is translated in practical life by loving others as one loves oneself, recognizing their wants, difficulties and troubles as one's own.

For Gandhi religion meant selfless service. He writes: "If I found myself entirely absorbed in the service of the community, the reason behind it was my desire for self-realization. I had made the religion of service my own as I felt that God could be realized only through service."

The movement against untouchability inspired by Gandhi is the result of his vision of seeing God in all human beings. He started a weekly paper 'Harijan' to promote this movement against untouchability. The twofold objectives of the movement were to do away with the unnatural division and to provide justice to Harijans. He tried to make the Savarna Hindus realise that by practising untouchability they had committed a crime against humanity and God, by treating a good part of their fellow beings as inferior to them. By
his example of moving with untouchables Gandhi enlightened the Savarnas that "before the throne of the Almighty we shall be judged, not by what we have eaten, nor by whom we have been touched, but whom we have served and how." 87

d) Detached and desireless action

The 'action', for a karma yogi who, though ever active does not claim to be the doer, is inaction. This feature of a karma yogi given in the Gita is as follows: "He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a yogi and he has performed all action." 88

Swami Vivekananda has commented very succinctly on the dynamism of a karma yogi:

The ideal man is he who in the midst of greatest silence and solitude finds the intensest activity and in the midst of intensest activity, the silence and solitude of the desert....goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic and his mind is calm as if he were in a cave where not a sound could reach him, but he is intensely, working all the time: That is the ideal of karma-yoga and if you have attained to that you have really learned the secret of work. 89

This reiterates once again the desireless and detached nature of a karma yogi's life.

The success of Gandhi's life is rooted in this spirit of karma yoga. With his love for the downtrodden, he employed spinning as a remedy for pauperism and unemployment prevalent in India. 90 Gandhi did not exempt anyone from this action. He set an example for his fellow beings by using loin cloth made of khadi instead of the Indian
mill cloth insisting that others also should wear khadi boycotting Indian mill cloth and foreign cloth.

This stern demand of Gandhi drew forth a protest even from Tagore to which Gandhi gave a reply:

He thinks, for instance, that I want everybody to spin the whole of his or her time to the exclusion of all other activity ...... so far is this from truth, that I have asked no one to abandon his calling, but on the contrary, to adorn it by giving everyday only 30 minutes to spinning as a sacrifice for the whole nation.

Inspite of all the obstacles Gandhi pressed forward with his campaign of spinning in a bid to uplift the downtrodden and galvanize the common people. Gandhi, like a true karma yogi, worked in the midst of a boisterous world with calmness experiencing interior joy.

e) Spirit of joy

A karma yogi should have the quality of equal vision or sameeksha which consists in seeing all the different feelings and reactions in one's own self with equanimity and poise, a state of absorption in the Supreme in which heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour are accepted alike. Only when a karma yogi is calm and serene with an equanimous outlook, can he experience the ecstasy that is eternal.

It is a joy that over-rides the jolts, irritations and problems of life which neither the world can give nor take away. This source of joy has got the fountain head of all joy, wisdom and love. A yogi is one who enjoys the peace of the Eternal while still living in the body.
Gandhi, too, had experienced this eternal joy and peace in his life. He finds this joy, "lies in the fight, in the attempt, in the suffering involved, not in the victory itself." He believed that God appears to us not in person but through events. Such events strengthened his trust in the providence of God. It was because of this trust that he let his insurance policy lapse during his stay in South Africa. Commenting on this he wrote: "I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures. Mine is a life full of joy in the midst of incessant work. In not wanting to think of what tomorrow will bring for me I feel as free as a bird."  

Gandhi is a living witness to the ideal of karma yogi proposed in the Gita. He considered introspection and contemplation as a basis and guide to meaningful action in society and for society with the attitude of experimentation.

3.2. "One step enough" dictum

Gandhi seems to have drawn inspiration from 'One step enough for me' in the hymn, 'Lead Kindly Light' by Cardinal Newman. He started with limited equipment and accepted the maxim, he has put it, 'One step at a time is enough for me'. To quote Gandhi: "I do not want to foresee the future, I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following." Gandhi, however, never stopped, with one step or a few steps but continuously moved on taking one step after another.

Gandhi's One-step methodology of functioning is evident all through his life. He explains: "We may be sure from our past experience that the next step will always be in view...."
impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we imagine. But it seems impenetrable when, in our impatience, we want to look beyond that one step."\textsuperscript{100} If a step he had taken was wrong, he would change it. He declared: "I claim no infallibility. I am conscious of having made a fetish of consistency. I am a votary of truth and I must say that what I feel and think at a given moment on the question, without regard to what I have said before it - \textit{My vision} gets clearer with practice."\textsuperscript{101}

Gandhi’s approach to the concept of 'One step enough' dictum was evident in the exposition of his own life events. In 1893, after the completion of his work connected with the civil suit for a client named Abdullah, in South Africa, he decided to return to India. But on the eve of his return, he came across a news item in the 'Natal Mercury' which gave details of a Bill aimed at disenfranchising the Indians. Gandhi’s mind rebelled against it. He applied his policy of experimentation and changed his earlier plan of returning to India into fighting against this bill.\textsuperscript{102}

The next step he undertook was to guide other Indians at the farewell party organised in his honour, converting it into a political committee. Postponing his return by a month he took a further step leading a campaign against the Bill. He was continuously striving to win his fights against discrimination based on racial differences, stressing the policy of his experimentation. This attitude of experimentation led him to success and made him a symbol - symbol of protest both for the Indians who wanted to assert their rights and to the Europeans who wanted to suppress them. Thus Gandhi’s first success in his political campaigns gave him confidence to continue his
The visible transformation in the 'self' of Gandhi has been overawed by his pedagogy of self-discipline and his yoga of actions forming the methodology with a guideline of "one step enough" dictum.

A guru who has experienced the effect of growth in his own personality by actions is capable of moulding the personality of others through his own personal example. Gandhi, the guru involved himself in the process of transforming the personality of the masses with the light of his personal development guiding him.

Article ii

TRANSFORMATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Gandhi wanted the transformation of the masses to be a continuous process. As a teacher who knows his student, he was aware that the goal he had set for the masses was too high. Hence he first aimed at the total change of the immediate circle around him, then the transformation of the wider group of workers, spreading eventually to the masses and ultimately encompassing all humanity.

1. Revolutionary approach to transformation

Gandhi adopted a two-pronged approach - one was 'revolutionary' and the other 'evolutionary'. Revolutionary transformation is one that brings about an abrupt change in one's thinking and action.
a) Personal example in revolutionary transformation

Dandi March is an effective example of the revolutionary transformation where personal example play an important role in the mob transformation. This was a turning point in the history of India's freedom movement. Gandhi was confident that he could create an awakening in the people by embarking on this adventure. But some of his close friends were apprehensive as to how this novel project would work. Gandhi said to a freedom fighter from Andhra: "It is a battle to the finish. The Divine Hand is guiding it. It must be prolonged till the last offers himself for satyagraha."¹⁰³

Gandhi made the Sabarmati Ashram at Ahmedabad the starting point of his march to Dandi. He began to make the necessary arrangements by selecting 79 volunteers whom he considered to be fit both for physical exertion and mental endurance. Then he gave them orientation talks as what they should do and not do during their long march. He asked them figuratively "to keep their courage in their pocket in this time of crisis."¹⁰⁴

Gandhi opened his epoch-making march on the 12th of March, 1930. He applied the principles of non-violence and passive resistance without blood shed in this revolution. People were exhilarated and were flowing in large numbers as if a sea of humanity¹⁰⁵ to shower their blessings upon the marching leaders, teeming with enthusiasm and admiration. Jawaharlal Nehru said on the occasion, "Today the pilgrim marches ahead on his long trek... it is not easy to escape from his magic spell and even a man of clay could feel the spark of life pulsating in him."¹⁰⁶

Gandhi delivered speeches on various topics as he passed through...
the villages appealing to the people. His exhortation brought the elite of the society-teachers and students, together and he was able to obtain their co-operation in this cause. 107

Thus as Gandhi moved from one place to another, the whole country was moving under his electrifying spell. The salt satyagraha was a sensational success. Within a period of 3 weeks from 12th March to 6th April the word 'salt' became mysteriously a word of power, 108 and the whole country came under the charisma of Gandhi.

The secret behind this mob transformation was Gandhi's personality and the intense training small groups of people had received from him through life in the ashrams.

2. Ashram: Place for evolutionary change

Ashram can be defined as "a traditional Hindu pattern of simple community living oriented to spiritual discipline and realisation." Gandhi started ashram life even when he was in South Africa. The 'Phoenix Settlement' and 'Tolstoy Farm' were attempts on this line. The first ashram he founded in India was only on May 25th 1915 in Kochrab, Ahmedabad; he named it Satyagraha Ashram. 110

The object of Satyagraha Ashram was to prepare its members for the service of the country, through constant discipline of the self. For the training of the inmates in achieving self-realization, the twin principles of satya and ahimsa had been elaborated into a set of eleven vows.

2.1 Vows practised in the Ashram

Truth is the first among the vows and is the name of God, the
one and only Reality. Truth does not mean mere abstention from speaking or practising untruth, but "we in the Ashram should understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be truth in thought, truth in speech and truth in action."\textsuperscript{111} Gandhi was convinced that observation of this vow of truth enables a person to keep all the rules of correct living without much effort. All other observances of the Ashram arise from this quest for truth.

Next vow is Ahimsa, for which Gandhi had a wider meaning. "Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of ahimsa is violated by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody."\textsuperscript{112} So the followers of this vow should have a purified mind and love for all living beings. He was not to consider anyone as his enemy though others consider him to be one.\textsuperscript{113} Instead he should love them, wish them well and serve them.

But this does not mean that one should submit to injustice meekly. On the contrary, one should oppose every wrong with all one's might in a non-violence way, ready to suffer patiently all hardships and even death from his opponent. Gandhi was particular that who ever joined the ashram should accept this meaning of ahimsa literally.\textsuperscript{114}

For Gandhi the vow of Non-stealing had a wide application: "It is theft to take something from another even with his permission if we have no real need for it."\textsuperscript{115} One becomes guilty of theft if one takes anything that he does not need for his immediate use or using it for a longer period than for which it has been lent.\textsuperscript{116}

Another vow is Brahmacharya or chastity, which etymologically
means the search for or discipline that leads to the realization of 118 Brahman or God. But for Gandhi, Brahmacharya means control in thought, word and action, of all the senses. 119 It does not mean suppression of one or more senses but complete mastery over them all. 120 So it is a cultivated mental condition. 121

The vow of Non-possession or poverty is an extension of the vow of non-stealing. This vow forbids one to possess anything as private property or keep something which one does not really need. This vow demands a person's deliberate, voluntary reduction of wants. 123 It is a breach of love towards others if one possesses something of which others are in need. Gandhi advised the members of the ashram to consider the ideal and strive after it as far as possible. 124 He assured them real happiness if the vow is kept faithfully and would make them feel as the richest men in the world without the possession of anything. 125

The vow of Physical labour is a law of nature and is essential for the observance of non-stealing and non-possession. Gandhi held that every man must labour at least for his food and clothing. 126 If anybody enjoys the necessaries of life, without undertaking bodily labour, he is a thief. 127 He gave top priority to agriculture in the list of bodily labour, since food is the first among the primary necessities of life. Next priority was given to spinning and weaving which became the main activity of the inmates irrespective of sex and age. 128

Control of the palate is considered a separate vow because it helps a lot to keep the vow of brahmacharya. 131 Gandhi said that eating should be only for sustaining the body and so food must be taken with
due restraint. He wanted the ashram inmates to abjure completely not only meat, liquor, tobacco and bhang but also spice and all condiments, that would excite animal passion. So if a man achieved the mastery of the palate, it meant that he had mastered other senses also.

The vow of **fearlessness** connotes "freedom from all external fear - fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation, of giving offence and so on." The easy way to develop fearlessness is to cultivate non-attachment for the body since all fears revolve around the body as the centre and would therefore disappear as soon as one got rid of attachment for the body. Gandhi advised the ashramites to practise non-violence for casting out fear: "I suggest to you that there is only one whom we have to fear, that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man, however, high-placed he may be."

Gandhi insisted on the **vow of tolerance**. Tolerance is not "indifference to one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it." This can be acquired only by self-discipline and self-purification. For Gandhi the study of other religions besides one's own will give one a grasp of rock-bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of the universal and absolute truth which lies beyond dust of creeds and faiths.

In order to observe other vows, tolerance was essential.

**Swadeshi** is a compound Sanskrit word which means one's own country. Gandhi defines it as the "spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion..."
of the "more remote."\textsuperscript{140} This vow demanded that the inmates should serve their country in preference to others and the immediate neighbourhood in preference to remoter places. To follow this principle one must possibly purchase one's requirements locally rather than buy imported things. \textit{Swadeshi} enjoins the sacrifice of oneself for the family, the family for the village, the village for the country and the country for humanity.\textsuperscript{141}

The last was the vow of \textbf{removal of untouchability}. For him "Removal of untouchability means love for and service of the whole world, and thus merges in \textit{ahimsa}. Removal of untouchability spells the breaking down of barriers between man and man and between the various orders of Being."\textsuperscript{142} He admitted to the \textit{ashram} even the untouchables as members.\textsuperscript{143}

The views proposed by Gandhi for the inmates of the \textit{ashram} were interconnected and the violation of anyone vow would affect the other vows. In order to help them in keeping these vows different types of activities were carried out, which made the \textit{ashram} an action-oriented community.

\subsection*{2.2. \textit{Ashram}: An action-oriented community:}

Life in the \textit{ashram} starts every day with morning worship that includes selected reading from scriptures, like Gita, Ramayana, New Testament etc.\textsuperscript{144} The day closes with evening prayer meetings which constitute discourses about topics regarding the daily life of the inmates.

Sanitary service, generally neglected outside, is considered a sacred service in the \textit{ashram}. This service was rendered as a means to self-discipline and hence members did the work of sanitation in
turn without engaging any worker from outside. Waste materials and night soil were converted into valuable manure. Even the outside roads and paths were kept neat and tidy.

Spinning is compulsory for the inmates. Gandhi wanted the ashram to be self-contained with agricultural activities like cultivation of cotton, fodder crops, vegetables and fruits. There was also a dairy in the ashram compound. Another important activity of the ashram was the imparting of education, which Gandhi considered as the means of personality development.

Education is a channel for human engineering that includes life-building, man-making and character-building processes. The aim of education there, is to build the whole person and develop his integral personality. Gandhi's scheme of education did not contemplate levelling every one to a single level like the levelling of different types of stones whether small or big by a steam roller in a road. According to Gandhi "real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the book of humanity?" He framed his concept of education in a simple formula "By education I mean an allround drawing out of the best in child and man - body, mind and spirit."
To achieve this vision of allround development, Gandhi introduced the scheme of Basic Education (Nai Talim).

3. **Basic Education: Means for personality transformation**

   Gandhi viewed education as an effective instrument for the full development of personality. With this vision, he deliberately programmed a scheme of education for life - Basic Education.

   In basic education the formation of integrated personality is conceived by Gandhi in a schematic way with its components of theory, methods and goals. His theory of education is firmly rooted in higher values of truth and non-violence which forms the basis for a strong character. The emphasis was not only on subjects like language, History, Mathematics etc. but also on crafts such as spinning, weaving, carpentry etc.

   Gandhi believed that education, in order to be realistic, should be closely integrated with the physical and social environments of the students. So his methodology emphasised the training of students for manual work through productive crafts. He wanted students to think independently, critically and creatively and to know the why and how of every process and phenomenon. He also recognised the need of imparting education through the medium of the mother tongue. Gandhi holds the view that "India has to flourish in her own climate and scenery and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature."  

   The goal of education as interpreted by Gandhi is the development of Head, Heart and Hand - 3H's - rather than the 3R's - Reading.
3.1. **Role of 3H's in character formation**

Real education consists not in packing the brain with numerous facts and figures, nor in passing examinations by reading many books, but in developing character. Hence character building is considered as the main task of the human race. This is achieved by a co-ordinated integration of the training of Head, Hand and Heart.

a) **Training of Head in character formation**

Gandhi attached great importance to intellectual development through manual training. He wanted even the simplest manual works like spinning, agriculture and carpentry to be performed intelligently by knowing the why and the wherefore of these processes. Such an attitude enlivens the intellect and leads to the formation of scientific attitudes. The maximum development of the intellect comes through the use of mother tongue as it enriches the child culturally. "We and our children", Gandhi said, "must build on our own heritage.

The training of handling a variety of raw materials and tools intelligently helps the child to satisfy his curiosity and creates a sense of involvement. "An intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and the quickest way of developing his intellect. In such a scheme of education all the senses of the child are developed with physical and mental co-ordination.

Knowledge is not the sole end of education but education is not possible without acquiring knowledge. Gandhi's basic education stressed the role of intellectual training in the development of character because
intellect without character can be very dangerous. He believed: "Literary training by itself adds an inch to one's moral height and character-building is independent of literary training."\(^{159}\)

Knowledge of truth and love help an individual to achieve true knowledge. Such knowledge is the necessary tool for objectively assessing ourselves and others. It leads one to analyse and modify one's actions where they are wrong. Thus true knowledge acquired through intellectual training leads to self-understanding and self-appreciation that liberate an individual from all bandage which forms the preliminary step in the formation of character.

b) **Role of Hand in the shaping of character**

Gandhi held that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs.\(^{160}\) It aims at integrating first the individual as a single entity and then to integrate him into the house, school and society. This process of integration is attained through the integration of various subjects of knowledge with craft.

The scheme that I wish to place before you today is not the teaching of some handicrafts side by side with so-called literal education. I want that the whole education should be imparted through some handicraft or industry.\(^{161}\)

Craft may be described as the activity whose economic value can be gauged from the goods and services satisfying the primary needs of mankind. All processes which produce saleable articles however, are not craft in the educational sense. To select the craft with an educational value Gandhi was very much influenced by Tolstoy's bread labour philosophy.\(^{162}\) In his earlier experiments regarding education.

\(^{159}\)\(^{160}\)\(^{161}\)\(^{162}\)
he had emphasised productive work and understressed intellectual development. Later he corrected the imbalance and gave equal importance to both. Gandhi said: "I would develop in the child his hands, his brain and his soul." 163

Gandhi's adherence to the principle of learning by doing, helps the child to realise his own potential. The quickest development of the potentials can be achieved by practising this principle in a scientific manner in the everyday activity of the child. 164 Such recognition leads to the development of the child's total personality, through work experience programmes. Children participate in productive work not only in schools but also in farms and factories.

Scientific teaching of a useful handicraft promotes the development of the mind and soul of the child. Gandhi said: "I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training...I hold that the highest development of mind and soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically." 165 Gandhi once said that he wanted not only thinking brains but also thinking fingers. Thus basic education lays emphasis on the integration of head and hand in personality development.

c) Heart, the co-ordinating factor in character building

In the formation of character, an awakening of the soul co-ordinates the development of mind and body (head and hand) that goes hand in hand. This spiritual training, to Gandhi, is the training of the heart. To quote Gandhi: "...unless the development of the
mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart."

For the formation of a good character, heart has to play an important role to bind head (knowledge) and hand (action) with the power of values. Thus strengthening of values by means of intelligent actions is a pre-requisite for the training of heart. "I do not believe", Gandhi said, "this can be imparted through books. It can only be done through the living touch of the teacher." 168

This culture of the heart should be based on positive and practical ethics that are deep and comprehensive. Gandhi believed that no education can build character unless it insists on the spiritual. He said: "To develop spirit is to build character and to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization." 169 Gandhi wanted to turn all colleges and schools into factories "for the making of character," turning out good men and women.

In his Autobiography he wrote:

I had always given the first place to the culture of heart or the building of character. ....I regarded character building as the proper foundation for their education and if the foundation was firmly laid, I was sure the children could learn all the other things themselves or with the assistance of friends.171

Gandhi was aware of the need for religious education and favoured the study of all religious texts. He believed "Even as a tree has
a single trunk but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium.\(^{172}\) This attitude promotes tolerance towards all religions. Hence the emphasis on the teaching of the basic truths common to all religions.

Basic education is the first system chalked out by Gandhi that integrated the education of head, heart and hand. Gandhi declared, "let us cry a halt and concentrate on educating the child properly through manual work, not as a side activity, but as a prime means of intellectual training."\(^{173}\) A proper integration of the head, heart and hand is required for the making of the whole man with a strong character and constitute the true economics of education.\(^{174}\) In short, basic education was the evolutionary technique for transformation advocated by Gandhi.

An attempt has been made in this section to analyse the evolutionary process of transformation in the personality of Gandhi and its impact on the masses. Gandhi has been driven into action with a goal of reaching the higher level of development where one sees the all-pervading Truth face to face. This higher aspiration was fulfilled, by reducing his wants as much as possible, and concentrating on the needs of others. This self-emptying process became his idiom of life, with the conviction that continuous giving of self to others is the climax of one's development. He believed that this process of self-emptying with its pedagogy of self-discipline would lead to the transformation of the self.

Self-discipline inheres in acts of humility, non-violence, renunciation, self-sacrifice and compassion. The notion of bravery is
a pivot in Gandhi's creed of non-violence which generates the power of soul-force to recast the value system. The continuous training of the self to change the value system is based on the process of self-correction. In order to make this change of self, techniques of prayer, fasting, confession, body purification etc. are pressed into service.

Gandhi believed that conscience can function in the development of self-awareness and in the choice of right and wrong. Every event in Gandhi's life was processed in the abyssal dimension in silence and meditation, leading to its transformation. The transformation is sustained through good habits based on values leading to strong character, the core of personality.

Gandhi's own methodology for self-transformation is his yoga of action. He insisted that one has to attain the most intimate communion between his self and the universal self, through nishkama karma. To this methodology he combined the 'one step enough' dictum.

The unique feature in Gandhi was that the main platform for the practice of these techniques was not the Himalayas or forests but his everyday life in active politics.

Gandhi was eager to share the secret of his personal transformation with his associates since he was convinced that the great thing in the life of every person is the transformation of personality. He applied revolutionary transformation through personal example and evolutionary transformation was imparted through ashram life. This latter approach was adopted in the case of the immediate circle. This small group of immediate associates acted as catalysts producing revolutionary changes in the lives of a wider circle of people. In order
to keep this torch of transformation burning from generation to generation Gandhi conceived the technique of Basic education.

In Gandhi's vision Basic education aimed at the all round development of personality, through the training of the 3H's - Head, Heart and Hand in a co-ordinated and integrated way. This was buttressed by placing craft at the centre of the curriculum. Gandhi's life was a series of experiments with Truth. His failures and his successes are there, for all to see. What stands out most clearly in these, however, is the transformation of his personality. A commitment to his ideas and ideals can be a transforming experience for lesser mortals.

In the next chapter Gandhi's theory of action and personality development is examined in the light of the personality models set forth by Maslow and Gandhi, projecting a model suitable to the Indian context.
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