PREFACE

Extracts from Mahatma Gandhi’s voluminous writings in English including his journals like Young India, Harijan and Indian Opinion have been prescribed continually for students of English Language and literature. As a learner and teacher of these lessons like the ‘Canker of Untruth’, I am under constant encouragement to study his autobiography and other selected writings which lead to the following findings: Gandhiji’s awareness of the Bhagavad Gita and the teachings on the interplay of duality, his concept of good and evil, his profound sense of righteousness, his reaction to the Indian sanitary scenario, his action oriented ideas on how to liberate the masses including destitute women from the clutches of poverty, his skill in engineering Nature cure to the level of a people’s programme for healthy survival and the awareness of the Industrial Revolution and its terrible consequences sprang from his simplicity in living, minimizing wants. The most positive out come of this simple living or Nature living is found in the style in which he interpreted sociology and health from the spiritual perspective.
As a messiah of simple living Gandhiji had a definite vision on the health and hygiene of the masses. To them health is not only merely the absence of illness but the state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well being. Health is also the state of complete harmony among all the disciplines of human life viz. body, mind, intellect and spirit. It supplies a congruent arrangement between the inner and the outer nature. The ultimate aim of each human act is to attain freedom from sufferings and fear. Every individual is concerned with a personal welfare and joy. But the modern man with a lot of comforts and sophistication challenges his own body systems. He is thrown into chaos and confusion. His physical and psychological systems are subjected to undergo strenuous discomforts, which cause different kinds of psychosomatic and somatopsychic ailments. In this state of affairs man loses his faculty to comprehend the various realms of his birth and purpose of life. His craving for peace and contentment is disastrously disturbed. Prof. Malkani remarks: “Man has a biological birth which gives him a place in the universe of matter. He has also a second, sociological birth in to the world of man. Lastly he has a psychological birth in to the inner world of mind and its consciousness.” Man’s attitude to the physical universe and the
society, his outer nature and to his own self's inner nature has been varying according to different cultures and beliefs. "In fact it is true that human nature very much depends on the meaning and purpose of life as conceived by man. This meaning varies from age to age and place to place, when man has new vision of life." However the different religio-psychic philosophies venture to coordinate the external life to the inner life. In spite of these, modern man is disintegrated. He has not been in harmony with his environment and fails to live meaningfully.

Gandhiji's experiment to establish this harmony is the constant effort of "a Vishwa Manava, a citizen of the world" who "practised India's Vedic ideal that the world is one family, Vasudhaiva kutumbakam." He "on the strength of Nature cure hoped that he would reach the traditional life span of a Hindu Seer." His life was a perpetual striving and experiment to integrate the triple realms of human existence viz. body, mind and spirit. How much he achieved and how far he could succeed in his efforts is an open book for perusal. A study of his 'Experiments with truth', his life and philosophy of ahimsa or nonviolence and satyagraha or steadfastness to truth or in other words, his living in harmony with
Nature, both internal and external, has been a tremendous source of inspiration to many great leaders and thinkers all over the world. It shall remain a beacon of light to all those who wish to find a solution in their life of doubts, gloom and confusion. As Usha Mehta remarks: "The Mahatma was a man marching towards a great destiny not only for India but for mankind through his life and work, his philosophy and programmes." He is more relevant today than ever. He has opened the door and shown the way to the world. Liberated to righteousness through Nature living, Gandhiji could experiment with truth and react forcefully to all the destructive aspects of the Industrial Revolution and the consequent global sanitary scenario. The present perusal in this regard is of timely relevance. The major source of information for this study on his conceptualization of living in harmony with Nature is the bulk of his writings including the most widely read An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth.

The present study contains seven chapters: Chapter I introduces the topic – the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi. Chapter II considers how Gandhiji reacted to the various aspects of Industrial Revolution. The
terrible situation brought about by the revolution is highlighted. Gandhian
perspective may enlighten the present world encircled by the gloom of
Industrial culture. Chapter III and IV examine Gandhiji's views on the
human body: Sareeramadyam khalu Dharma Sadhanam - the
Mahabharata concept of the Bahubalam – the soundness of body, his
vegetarianism, the simple living or Nature living and Gandhian
therapeutics. Chapter V attempts a study of the mind of Gandhiji – his
Buddhibalam and experiments with Truth. The simplicity in Nature living
led him to higher realms of righteousness and Truth. Chapter VI is an
effort to examine the spirit of the Mahatma – his Atmabalam, in its plight
to establish itself as an incarnation of Truth – Satyam Tuam Asi – a
parallel to the Vedanta Concept of Tat – Tuam – Asi. Chapter VII serves
the purpose of conclusion: the perpetual relevance of Mahatma Gandhi.
References:

1. N.R Malkani; Ramblings and Reminiscences of Gandhiji, Ahemedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1972, p234

2. N.R Malkani, p234


4. Sheshrao Chavan, pix

5. Sheshrao Chavan, p105