Mahatma Gandhi was neither an academic philosopher nor a religious seer. He was primarily a social reformer and a practical man who worked for the benefit of the human society. Today the technique of the old great philosophies of India are being revived in accordance with the modern western emphasising. But Gandhian thought is suited for all ages, because Gandhiji assimilated modern India in thought, lived them in his life and gave them social and political shapes through his philosophy. Even most of the countries of the world regard Gandhi as the 'Man of the Millennium', on twenty first century also. Gandhi's message was meant for every body in the world. Though he was born in India, he was the universal personality deeply in love with mankind as a whole. He used to say, "I am fully aware that my mission cannot be fulfilled in India alone, I am pining for the assistance of the whole world." That is why people all over the world accepted him as a model. Though he worked primarily for the Indians he considered himself to be a citizen of the world and yet did not cease to be a nationalist. By his spiritual and moral dialectics he synthesised the idea of nationalism with that of universalism. Gandhi himself said that he did not seek to recapture only the spirit of Hinduism but the spirit of all religions, which according to him, is love of God expressing itself in love of fellow beings. His call was therefore not that others should become Hindus, but the Christian, Buddhists, Muslims and others should live up to the best teaching of their own religion. Gandhiji only wanted that man can live in peace with his fellowmen and promote each other's welfare.
It is seen here that there was an impact of the different religious scriptures like the Bible, the Quran and the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin and others on the formation of some of the more important Gandhian concepts. But above all Gandhi was greatly influenced by Hinduism. That is why C.F. Andrews said, "The more we study Mahatma Gandhi’s own life and teaching the more certain it becomes that Hindu religion has been the greatest of all influences in shaping his ideas and actions". But at the same time it should be noted here that Gandhi’s views of Hinduism was much deeper and broader than Hinduism as generally understood. In other words he was a reformer of Hinduism. His Hinduism was based on the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita. He moulded his life in accordance with the basic teachings of this scripture. In his Hinduism, there was no place for untouchability, suppression of woman, casteism, communal disharmony etc. He thought that if these evils were not removed, his Hinduism could not attain its religious goal.

Mahatma Gandhi was accused of being ascetic in character. But this did not stand because he was not in favour of the mortification of the body. He took food, lived walk, enjoyed humour and felt blessedness in the natural surroundings. For Gandhi, religion was not a mere belief. He lived in the life of religions. He stressed on ethical religion based on moral principles. He was a true man in word and action. Mahatma Gandhi opposed the practice of rituals and sacraments, because it made the religion stagnant and sometimes dead. It became a formed and closed religion in which real spiritual Progress becomes
stunted and retarded. Gandhiji took religion not as something which the individual does with or in his solitariness, but as that which he does amongst his fellow beings. So his view of religion is different from Whitehead’s view of religion. According to Gandhi religion is a way of life which means it consists in the activities of every moment that one does with in his daily life and not in certain special actions that he does at certain special moments. For him, religion is not merely an adherence to a particular creed. It is a pervasive pattern of life. In this case Gandhi was very near in his approach to some of the recent western thinkers on philosophical theology such as W.E. Kennick, Paul Schmidt, and R.B. Braithwaite. These are all thinkers of the recent western analytic tradition. Religious statements according to these thinkers, are expressive of a pervasive behaviour pattern of the religious believer showing his intention to lead a special way of life and this way of life consists not only in behaviour but also in thinking and feeling. By taking religion as a way of life, these thinkers want to point out that religion is very near to morality and that morality constitute the very essence of religion. In comparing religion and morality of all these thinkers Braithwaite’s contribution is more important. He said that being a Christian, Christianity for himself means nothing but leading as having an intention to lead an agapeistic way of life i.e. a life of love and hence religion in its essence is nothing but morality.

Claiming superiority for ones own religion over others was very wrong and misleading according to Gandhi and such tendencies must
be given up. He observed that there was no need of any universal or world religion and what was needed was a true sense of tolerance towards other religions which meant love and respect for them, because all religions at bottom spoke of the same truth. The one religion, for Gandhi is beyond speech. Different men put it in different ways. We cannot say that one interpretation is correct and the other is false. Therefore Gandhi observed, "The necessity of tolerance which does not mean indifference to ones own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it ................................ True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith." Since his youth onwards, Gandhi made a persistent effort to understand the truth of all the religions of the world and adopt and assimilate in his own thought, word and deed all that he has found to be the best in those religions. For Gandhi, the different religions are "beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect." Gandhi's interpretation of different religions was akin to the religious ideas of saint philosopher like Swami Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Swami Vivekananda symbolised different religions as differently formed vessels with which different men came to bring water from a spring. The forms of the vessels are many but the water of truth that with which all seek to fill their vessels with, is the same. Vivekananda said, "The goal of religions is the same, but the language of the teachers differs." For
Radhakrishnan different religion represent not truth but views which are apprehension of truth, what men have believed. They are varied historical expression of one truth, which is universal and timeless in its validity. Gandhi said that as all religions are fundamentally the same, we should respect all religions equally. We should not merely tolerate but also respect the faith as our own. Gandhi prefers the term ahimsa to the word tolerance because tolerance may imply an assumption of the inferiority of other faith to ones own. But ahimsa teaches the same respect for other religious faith as we accord to our own.

Gandhiji was emphatically against proselytization. He was really opposed to conversion which were forced or which were attempted through material inducements. The aim of everyone of us should be according to Gandhi, to help a Hindu to be a better Hindu, a Musalman to become a better Mussalman and a Christian a better Christian and not to convert people of other faith to our own religion. But Gandhi was not opposed to voluntary conversion since religion was for Gandhi a personal matter and it was for him to decide and see which particular religion gave him the best satisfaction. But for that no dubious methods need be employed. Gandhiji said that if a religion had certain special qualities, certain attraction for a man, he would be naturally drawn towards it. In this case Gandhiji was very much appreciative of the attitude of Hinduism and Jainism on matters of religious toleration.

For Gandhi, religion has got practical importance in life. He tried to spiritualise all aspects of human life. Gandhiji said that religion
which took no account of practical affairs and did not help to solve them was no religion. Religion according to Gandhi must necessarily be pragmatic. He did not accept traditional or conventional religion. He did not adhere to any religious principle uncritically. Gandhiji dedicated his life to the service of the masses which was the essence of religion. He had a different concept of religion. He deviated from the traditional view of religion as belief in God, but believed in truth which helped him to embrace all religions. Hence he used the term religion in a wider sense. In all Gandhi's thought and action he took his stand on the principle of religion and morality. In this respect he seems to be very much influenced by Buddhism as a religion. Buddha has given an ethical path by following which, misery may be removed and liberation attained. This is known as the Noble eight fold path. The Noble eight fold path consist of eight steps which are (a) Right faith, (b) Right resolve (c) Right speech (d) Right action (e) Right living (f) Right effort (g) Right thought and (h) Right concentration. Morality according to Gandhi also formed the essence of religion. He said that religion must pervade every activity of men. Truth was his God and morality was his religion.

Some critics said that Gandhiji's concept of sarvodaya and stateless democracy are only example of Gandhiji's utopian ideas which could never be realised in actual practice. But Gandhi was not a visionary or a utopian. He himself said that he was a practical idealist. His ideas of sarvodaya was fully developed by in keeping with his
conception of the equality of all beings and he always tried to give equal dignity of individual man.

Mahatma Gandhi's moral ideas supersede the utilitarian maxim of the greatest good of the greatest number, because his morality consisted in doing good to all irrespective of caste, creed, nationality etc. It necessarily refers to self sacrifice and self suffering but the utilitarian will not agree to it.

Gandhiji advocated an open and dynamic form of Hinduism which finds no room for customs and traditions that choke a society. Gandhi's approach was that of a seeker of truth and of votary of non-violence or love. His mind was always open, fresh and receptive to truth as he went on finding it from day to day by experience.

Mahatma Gandhi had never accepted in principle the theory of the Hindus and the Muslims belonging to two distinct nations and he tried hard to convince both of them its pernicious character. He continued to the last day of his life to instil the lesson of unity among the communities of India. But there was one fundamental difficulty. The ruling power (The British Government) based its policy on the age old Machiavellian Principle of 'Divide and Rule'. Gandhiji expressed his views as follows: "Divided we must ever be slaves. This unity therefore cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us ...................... Hindu Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time under all circumstances." Again Gandhiji said "For good and
for ill, the two communities are wedded to India, they are neighbours, sons of the same soil, they are destined to die here as they are born here. Nature will force them to live in peace if they do not come together voluntarily". In 1924 Gandhiji fasted for 21 days for the sake of Hindu Muslim unity. Gandhi had earlier whole heartedly supported the Muslims in their khilafat campaign and had agitated for the release of Ali brothers. But today we have seen in our country that many instances of conflicting views arises between Hindu and Muslim community. So these instances of conflicting views can be destroyed if we follow the principle of love, not fear, of trust and good faith, not hatred and distrust as advised by Gandhi.

Gandhiji wanted to establish secular democracy in India. The word secular has different descriptions and definitions. For Gandhi secularism didnot imply that there was no place of religion in our lives, it indicated that the state didnot patronise a particular religion but allowed to practise and propagate all religions. Gandhi's movement for independence was a secular movement where religion was intertwined with the character of the movement. A deep analysis of Gandhi's view of religion points out to its secular nature. Gandhi's secularism didnot reject spirituality and religion. His secularism preached equality, humanity, universal love and tolerance. By secularism he meant equality of religions in the eyes of the state.

The real fathers of the ideology of secularism were the Americans who argued that the Indian thinkers have arbitrarily sought to understand
and explain secularism with a definite reference to religion and Indian mind is not able to see the basic dichotomy between secularism and religion. Western thinker claimed that the modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand and Gandhi were men of religious heritage and spiritual experience. The protagonist of western concept of secularism have overlooked the fact that the concept of secularism which is applicable to the west is strictly inappropriate in the Indian content. Spirituality is conceived in India as the foundation of social, economic and political good. In the west religion is a way of worship and implies a separation of church from the state where as in the Indian content, religion is a way of life and cannot the separated from the state and social life is determined by religious norms. Hence Gandhi is justified in interpreting secularism in his own terms giving it a spiritualist bias. Spiritualism is awakening afresh with all the essence of humanism. To Mahatma Gandhi it is something more than mere awakening. It is a practice and poignance for manifestation of inward perfection for a better beyonding of consciousness. That religion and spiritualism are closely interlinked is an age old truism that Gandhi emphasized from the practical point of view. Gandhi stood for secularism though he claimed to be a staunch sanatani Hindu and Vaisnava. He wanted to restore the relationship between the church and the state which was snubbed in the west. The Gandhian concept of secularism may be considered as the most humanist and human rights oriented concept. His concept of humanistic secularism is not only
opposite to dogmatism or rigidity but also a search in continuity for finding the means of establishing harmonical human relation. His secularist ideology refrained a man from taking revenge and instead inspires him to convince and to be convinced by judgement.

For Mahatma Gandhi, the field of religious life is not separated from the social, economic and political life. Mahatma Gandhi shows the way to humanity how a men even in the heart of social and political life remains as pure as is necessary for God realization. By the introduction of religion into politics he simply meant to found politics on a pure moral ground. Politics as generally understood, is a nasty game of foul play where the purity of means is nobody's concern. Gandhiji really wanted to eradicate the game of nasty and foul means from politics and wanted to find it on a pure moral ground.

Some critics said that his concept of swadeshi and bread labour are symbols of narrow nationalism. But this is not true. Gandhiji was deeply concerned about the quality of the ordinary man who was engaged in physical labour. He tried to destroy the level of status i.e. high or low. The same concern for the dignity and quality of life of the ordinary worker may be seen in Gandhi's emphasis for khadi and such other small scale industries in opposition to heavy industries. He believed that the economies of heavy industries had no place for the dignity and value of man. The latest advocate of decentralisation in backward Asian countries is the noted swadeshi economist, Dr. Myrdal. In his recent study 'Asian Drama' in three volumes, he advocated
decentralised industry which was suited for India and other similarly situated countries. He said that Indian economy should not follow the western pattern and should be 'job oriented'. This was the very thing that Gandhiji used to talk and which we have failed to follow. Consequently the unemployment problem arises, the gap between poor and rich is widened and Indian has to take many foreign aids for its development. Indian economy is under a great trap due to the heavy loan burden from foreign countries. So in these cases Gandhi's vow of swadeshi cannot be avoidable. Gandhian economic attach more significance to man than machines, more emphasis on human values than money values. Today also this vow has most valuable significance. We have thus seen how throughout his thought and practice Gandhiji has been thoroughly religious man and all his important concepts have been formed under the impact of his deep religious conviction.

God occupied the supreme place in Gandhi's philosophy. His deeper thought moved around God. Gandhiji conceived his God to be the Eternal, the Unborn, the One without a second. Gandhiji believed in absolute oneness of God. He could not find God apart from the rest of humanity.

Though Gandhi's concept of religion was attached to reason yet in his conception of God he gave more importance on faith than reason and specially for proving God's existence. Here Gandhi committed no mistake, because for him religion did not mean only worship of God it was the foundation stone of all the activities of his life. On the
other hand God is infinite being so it is not possible for finite human
being to prove God's existence through reason. Hence Gandhiji was
right in giving more importance on faith than reason for God's existence.

For Gandhi, the statement 'God is truth' is partial and the
statement 'Truth is God' is all inclusive. It is by this principle that
he has been able to unite and draw into his fold the Christians,
Mohammedans, Buddhists and others. It brings about religious
co-existence, co-operation and harmony. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy
of God as Truth expanded and universalised his religious faith. Without
entering into the controversy about the correct conception of God
Mahatma Gandhi called Him Truth. He avoided the opposed and divergent
conception of God and arrived at a position which may be acceptable
to all men. To him the whole of human life, individual and collective
is a field for experimentation. The purpose of the experiment is the
attainment of Truth.

Gandhiji did a great job in reconciling spiritualism with social
service. For Gandhi, moksa or salvation did not require one to go to
the jungle by renouncing the world for sadhana or meditation. He said
that the best sadhana was to love the entire creation and through this
God or Truth could be realised. For Gandhi, the social and the spiritual
goals were not different. They were basically one and the same. He
observed that it is only by a selfless service of others that one could
realise God and giving up of the world is not necessary for moksa
but the giving up the selfish motives.
Gandhiji did not disregard the idol-worship of the people. He said that all human beings were not philosophers, capable of contemplating God as an Invisible Reality. For him, idols or images are simply media of worship by which layman can purify their souls and can keep living faith in God. Gandhiji hoped that every man was capable of reaching the blessed and the indescribably pure state where he would find himself one with God. Here Gandhi's approach was very near to that of Paul Tillich, a famous modern American theologian. Of course, Tillich's approach was theological and that of Gandhi's practical, but still there was a similarity between the two. Both of them recognized the role of symbols in religion as valuable media for our establishing a relation with the Deity. Like Tillich, Gandhiji also recognised that symbols point beyond themselves and at the same time they partake of the nature of the reality which they point to.

Critics sometimes pointed out that Gandhi was not a consistent thinker, because he made different statements on different occasions on the same point. But Gandhi did not bother much about being consistent. Hence he said, "At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a particular question". This statement clearly removed the doubt and proved that Gandhi never even cared for being consistent. Here we may mention one statement i.e. he transferred from the statement 'God is truth' to 'truth is God'. He observed that someone may not believe in God, but the truth can never be denied: truth is
always truth. Again another instance can be mentioned here i.e. when he said that he is an advaitist and yet he can support dvaitism (Dualism). For him, the world is changing every moment and is therefore unreal. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and hence it is real to that extent. Gandhi has no objection to calling it real and unreal and therefore he is an anekāntavādīn or syādvādīn. His syādvāda is not the syādvāda of the learned. It is his own. Gandhiji was not a philosopher. So he was not using these words in philosophical sense. He was using these words in his own sense. Moreover it is known that Gandhi did not worship God as a human being in the sense that we are human beings. But he said that God is personal to those who need his personal presence. The foregoing discussion shows that there is no question of his beliefs or statements being mutually inconsistent or contradictory. His statements were the result of some of his basic convictions which he so unshakingly cherished. His basic convictions were the result of the influences of Hinduism and various other religions which had made deep impression on him. So we cannot call Gandhi a sceptic. He always tried to avoid doubt in all his discussions.

Mahatma Gandhi is an apostle of non-violence. It is in the pursuit of truth that he discovers his principle. Non-violence is the working of the soul force against brute force. It stands for selfless action, universal love and right knowledge. It is a yoga for God realisation. For Jaina and Buddha tradition as well as in the Hindu
epics complete ahimsa could be practiced with success only by a saint or a monk. But Gandhiji refused to accept different stands for saints and ordinary man. For him, all the higher moral and spiritual virtues could be practiced by ordinary people also, if they made sincere effort for that. Hence it is clear that for Gandhi non-violence was not meant for the saints and monks alone, it was meant for the common people as well. He tried to reconcile Vedantic Advaitism and Jain Pluralism and relativism. He was not an absolutist although he believed in his principle absolutely. He took truth as absolute but he believed that man could know it only relatively. Man's idea of truth could never be fixed and static. Man's idea of truth had always a scope to grow. Similarly moral principle like that of ahimsa were to be cherished absolutely. But in some occasions it might demand concession. Man does not have any omnipotence like God. So they must concede to the demand of the occasion. So in this case Gandhi was a moral relativist. But still Gandhi's moral convictions were absolute and he hardly ever liked to compromise with them.

Moreover Gandhiji also did a great job in emphasising for the first time in modern Indian thought upon the purity of means as a necessary condition for the attainment of good end. Gandhi did not believe that means was after all means. For him, means was everything. Hence he said "we could not expect a rose by planting a noxious weed."

Gandhi's life was a burning example of how people without arms could fight successfully against the injustice of armed men. Gandhiji
is the only answer to the nuclear age. No one will be able to continue his existence by pursuing the path of violence. All must come to the end to the path of non-violence. Regarding atom bomb Gandhiji observed "Non-violence is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy."

I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself, 'unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.'

Gandhiji resisted the danger of atomic war with prayerful action. So we find here that the creation of nuclear weapon free world is essential for peace and stability. On the other hand if it is allowed to possess of nuclear weapons to all states it will lead to a highly dangerous and unstable world. The noble peace prize winner of 1995 Joseph Rotblat worked on the Manhattan Project that built the first atomic bomb during the second world war. But he campaigned tirelessly against the use of atom bomb for mass destruction and nuclear disarmament. He was banned from entering the United States. But today the United States claims to spread a campaign for nuclear disarmament. Hence today everyone feels that the world should adopt non-violence for peace and stability. Gandhiji had been able to defeat a most powerful British Government through applying non-violence means without firing a single shot. For a peaceful and stable world nuclear weapons altogether should be eliminated except of course for peaceful purposes though the present age is known as the age of science and technology.

Gandhi is not modern for those who in this country pretend
to behave like western sahibs, living according to the western ways. In the words of Swami Vivekananda imitation is not civilization. In this case J.B. Kripalani says, "If adherence to truth and the supremacy of the moral law is modern, Gandhiji was modern. If keeping one's word and fulfilling one's engagement is a sign of modernity, Gandhiji was modern. If recognition of the dignity of physical labour is a sign of modernity, Gandhiji was modern. If tolerance and good understanding are modern, Gandhiji must be considered modern. If feeling at home with those who differ from one on who are opponents is modern, Gandhiji was modern. If universal courtesy, without caring for position or power or wealth is modern then surely Gandhiji was modern. If the democratic way of life is modern Gandhiji was among the elect. If identification with the lowly and the lost is modern then Gandhiji was modern. If untiring work for the poor, the needy, the down trodden, the unfortunate, daridranarayan is modern then Gandhiji was modern. If standing aloof in the midst of raging human passions is modern, then Gandhiji was modern. Above all if dying for a noble cause is modern, then Gandhiji was modern."

From the foregoing discussions of religious and philosophical thoughts of Gandhi we find that he did not make an attempt to evolve new system of thought. He gave much more importance on the problems of man's nature and his ultimate destiny. Gandhi made remarkable attempts to effect reconciliation between the ancient religious thought and the modern ideologies which donot show their hostility towards
religion. But it cannot be said that the work of reconciling the two extremes of thought has been completed and the contradictions and conflicts between them have been solved. Indian philosophers have still tried to look at the world and meet the challenges or the new ideological forces coming from the different directions of the world. That is why D.M. Dutta expresses his great hope that the twentieth century Indian Philosophy will form the 'Steps towards the evolution of a world philosophy'. There was for a long time controversy related between the philosophers of science and religious philosophers in the west. But the Indian thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries do not involve themselves in any such controversy. The contemporary Indian thinkers gave a place of supreme importance to religion and at the same time they have full faith in the utility and the necessity of science and technology. In this respect science does not really come in conflict with religion which is essentially concerned with the moral and spiritual development of man and with revealing the mysteries of man's existence and the ontological reality. As Aurobindo puts it, "The religion of India is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life, but to the whole of life, its spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, our individual character, affections and aspirations." The biography of Tilak reveals how he organised the Ganapati festival to arouse the patriotic feeling of the people. Tagore tried to spiritualise education by establishing his great centre of learning 'Viswa Bharati'. He was establishing this great centre
not only to impart education in an academic and technical sense but also to enable one to realise the ideal of internationalism and human fellowship. Gandhiji and many of them can not be called philosophers in the academic sense. They did not develop their thought in a strictly logical and dialectical way. But they revealed in a remarkable way man's situation in the world, his secular and the spiritual urges and the goal of his life. Gandhi's thinking was not only to confined his thought, but it also revealed through his personal life, his teaching and through his self sacrifice and selfless service for his people and for humanity as a whole. Mahatma Gandhi looked at the whole of the individual and social life from religious angle.

Here we find that Gandhi's life, thought, teaching and actions are relevant for all aspirant of ethical and spiritual life. By proper study of Gandhi's life and teaching we can came to the conclusion that Gandhiji was idealistic in his approach and he was eminently pragmatic in the translation of his ideals into practice. Like Plato Gandhi didnot derive values from any vague concept. His concept of value was derived from the spiritual depth that he felt and lived with an essential communication with God and his fellowmen.

When we are facing a crisis due to dichotomy between the material and the spiritual, Gandhiji as a thinker has laid down certain basic principles and strategy to remove this dichotomy through an integral perspective.
We see that today science and technology have much more developed. Man has an advance knowledge of science and technology today. The development of science and technology explain physical nature of human being only and do not satisfy the goal of entire mankind. The main goal of entire mankind consists in spiritual perfection which can be realised only in and through the life of moral action. In that case Gandhian thought would be relevant to the twenty first century. Gandhi’s ideology provides a sense of awakening spirituality in man which is today absent from human mind. At the same time it should be noted here that Gandhiji wanted the development of that science and technology which promotes peace and harmony in mankind. It is obvious that if we want to get rid of the ills of the modern world and intend to install a world free from any form of inequality, exploitation, deprivation and conflict, there is a need to adopt Gandhi’s religious principles. It is no doubt that Gandhi is relevant today and for centuries to come. Jawaharlal Nehru said, “The light is gone and yet it will shine for a thousand years.” When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the noble peace prize winner of U.S.A. came to India as a pilgrim in 1959 he said that Gandhi is inescapable. The relevance of Gandhi’s message is not local, regional or general and personally relevant to some but relevant universally for all.

Gandhiji is fitted to be a good guide to the entire humanity. His searching for truth through love alone proved that Gandhi’s mind was always open like that of a scientist to new discoveries. Spirituality
in India is generally associated with world denying and ascetic attitudes towards life. It has been a subject of individual's practice for getting liberation from the cycle of re-birth. A seeker of God or aspirant of Moksa was suggested to live in the cave and jungle of the Himalayas and go through the way of meditation. Lord Mahavir and Lord Buddha both preached the path of renunciation and meditation for the realization of spirituality. To Sankaracharya, this world is an illusion. Those who believe in the path of devotion try to realise spirituality through prayer, worship and other prescribed rituals. But for Gandhi spirituality is embodied in the whole of our life and action, it does not need to give up the world and sit in the cave of Himalayas. Gandhiji remarked that God is neither in heaven nor down below, but in everyone. For Gandhi self less service of the needy helps us in self realization. He said that self realisation is impossible without service and identification with the poorest. Gandhi therefore identified Satyanarain-truth and God with daridranarain - God in the poor.

Religion in India is not dogmatic. In India religion is closely associated with philosophy. No religious movement has ever come into existence without developing as its support a philosophic content. The problems of religion stimulate the philosophic spirit. The Indian mind has been traditionally exercised over the question of the nature of Godhead, the end of life and the relation of the individual to the universal soul. Every Indian school discussed the views of other schools before coming to a conclusion and in this process they became
richer in content. All the schools of Indian philosophy depend on reasoning as the chief means of speculation. Mahatma Gandhi was born in India. Mahatma Gandhi also occupies an important place as an interpreter of Hindusim and as a moral religious thinker on twentieth century. We have earlier discussed that though Gandhi's own religion was Hindusim which he loved very much, he at the same time loved other religions as well. Gandhiji inculcated many points from the other religions of the world in his practical life. Hence it cannot be denied that Gandhiji also tried to relate religion and philosophy in his discussions though he was not a philosopher in a strict sense.

It is known by all that reverence for the past is one of the important characteristics of Indian philosophy. The Indian civilization (minimum 4,000 yrs old) still survives with its essential features. Since Vedic times the Indian civilization has been flourishing without any discontinuity. It is not changing and all the time it professes to be only a new name for an old way of thinking. The Upanisads are regarded as a revival of something found already in the vedic hymns. The Bhagavad gita professes to sum up the teaching of the Upanisads. This respect for the past has produced a regular continuity in Indian thought. As an India thinker Mahatma Gandhi also could not escape from the influence of this characteristic. Gandhi's thought and ideas are new and revolutionary and yet he claims no originality for them. He often asserts that in his ideas he merely follows in the footsteps of the old prophets and reformers and tries to fulfill the law and commandment
and is offering nothing new to the world. At the same time it can not be denied that though he had not propounded a philosophical system in the academic sense of the term yet a 'new philosophical outlook is clearly discernible in his writings.

Some critics commend that Gandhiji was outdated, backward, traditional and unprogressive in his outlook. But he has taught a great lesson to modern man which it properly understood and thought over will bring real peace and progress. Gandhi has played in recent times the role that was played by the Upanisads in India and Socrates in Greece in ancient times and by the Danish thinker Kierkegaard in modern times. The Upanisads took knowledge of the self to be highest human ideal. Both Socrates and Kierkegaard in their own ways raised and propagated slogan of 'know thyself' for man. Kierkegaard advised people in modern times not to be mad after objective and scientific knowledge and he asked them to return their inner life and know their inner being. Similarly Gandhi took it all useless to have big power structures and heavy industries if man could not remain man. Gandhi had a real concern for the man to be man in the true sense of the term. If his conception of man is understood in its real spirit and everyone in the present world realizes the dignity of the individual man, all acts of suppression, tyranny, discrimination a perthaid etc will automatically go away. Similarly if one understands the real spirit of his philosophy of advaita, the rivalaries between man and man, between
Gandhiji's thought can only be understood in terms of a distinction between the possible and the ideal. In his remote ideal of society, there would be no army or police. But in the actual state he would recognise the need for those institutions since many would not observe the ethical standards. Of course Gandhiji laid down certain conditions which would make the ideal the practical. But his critics and even some of his followers deliberately or unconsciously target those conditions and make him absurd. So Gandhi has given a definite direction, the path that we should follow though he has allowed certain amount of relaxation to suit the conditions of life. Gandhi's religion is a highly inspiring one and serves to lead humanity marching towards a better, happier and more harmonious world.

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