6.1. In the preceding chapters we have discussed the impact of religion on the political, economic and social thoughts of Gandhi. Now we are to give our conclusions. But before this is done we shall attempt to give a summary of the preceding chapters. So the first section of this chapter will be devoted to the summary and the rest to our conclusions.

6.1.1. Chapter I is the introductory chapter. It gives us an idea of how religion which is the breath of Indian life forms the main spring of all the thoughts of Gandhi. Gandhi tried to prove the fact that true religion does not consist in withdrawal from the world but greater participation in this life with a view to improve the conditions of human existence.

In this context we have discussed the development of religion in general. Religion was not differentiated from other fields of human life in the most primitive society. But a time arrived when religion was thought to be an independent affair, closed up in a water tight compartment, and governed purely by its own laws. Thus there arose a sort of dualism between
secular life and religious life. Gandhiji attempted to synthesise religion with other aspects of human life.

Again in this chapter we have tried to throw some light on the condition of India prevailing at that time from the social and religious point of view. Here we have briefly discussed the activities of the different thinkers like Ram Krsna Paramhamsa and his disciple Vivekananda, Dayananda, Saraswati, Tagore and others. Though the influence of these thinkers is seen in Gandhi, yet Gandhi has his unique contribution in the sense that his message was not meant for a selected few in some parts of India but for every section of the Indian population. In the process of the development of the Indian religion Gandhiji had a great contribution. The message given by the different thinkers of the twentieth century would have remained a poet’s fancy or a philosopher’s utopia but for its practical application in political and social life by Mahatma Gandhi.

Further, we have tried to show that Truth and Ahimsa formed the aim of human life right from the days of the Ramayana. But there was another tradition existing side by side which justified the use of violence to some extent to gain certain ends. Thus the social life witnessed two different traditions - the one upholding perfect non-violence, which for our purpose we have called the Ramayanic tradition. The other which justified violence was found in the tradition of the Mahabharata. Mahatma Gandhi stood for the former tradition.
6.1.2. In chapter II we have discussed the different philosophical and religious principles of Mahatma Gandhi. Though Gandhi was not the originator of any new religion or any new system of philosophy, Gandhi tried to interpret the ancient ideals in a new light. His credit lies in the practical application of the religious principles in personal, political and social life. In this sense Gandhi may be called an applied philosopher.

In this chapter we have given a brief idea of Gandhi's view of religion. According to Gandhi, religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them cannot be called true religion. Everything that Gandhi wrote and did bears witness to his faith in God or a spiritual principle or Truth which is another name for his religion.

A large portion of this chapter is devoted to the influences that shaped Gandhi's outlook. The orthodox Vaishnava family in which Gandhi was born, the Hindu religious texts such as the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam as well as different thinkers of the East and the West all combined to produce a powerful influence in shaping Gandhi's outlook. Mahatma Gandhi's ideas are a beautiful synthesis of nectars gathered from a variety of spiritual flowers of the East and the West.

The conception of God forms the basis of a religious life. The nuclear elements of Gandhiji's thought and philosophy
is his belief in God. Gandhiji believes that God is not an object of logical proof or reasoning though His existence can be justified by means of certain arguments also. But in fact God is more a principle of one’s own realisation or inner faith. Mahatma Gandhi identifies Truth with God. In him we find the renaissance of the age old teachings of the Upanishads that God is sat, cit and Aminda. Truth is not a mere attribute of God but He is simply That.

With regard to the three paths leading to God - jñāna, bhakti and karma Gandhiji laid more emphasis on Bhakti and karma. The influence of the Gita, which sings the glory of devotion, is well pronounced here. Besides prayer and worship Gandhiji relies on karma in the form of selfless service of the poor as a way to supreme God realisation.

In this chapter we have also given a brief discussion of the question whether Gandhi had an advaitic leaning. Philosophers differ with regard to this view. There is no doubt, however, that Gandhi was a strong supporter of the principle of oneness or identity like that of Shankara and this monism finds expression in all his thoughts. For example the principle of sarvodaya, the abolition of untouchability, equal respect for all religions, equal distribution of wealth, all have reference to this basic conception of identity.
There is also a discussion of the principles of Truth, Love and Non violence. In no other philosophy of the world perhaps, save that of the Jaina has Ahimsa found so much importance as that of Gandhi. According to Gandhi Truth and non violence are closely interlinked. Ahimsa is the practical expression of Truth. Here we also have a comparison of Gandhi and Marx on Truth and Non violence. For both Gandhi and Marx Truth is the end but they differed with regard to the means. According to Gandhi non violence was the means to achieve Truth and this could be brought about by the personal effort of the individual. But Marx justified even violent means to achieve Truth.

The observance of the different vows formed an important part of Gandhiji's life. Gandhi gave these vows a new outlook and socio-religious content. Mysticism is a common feature of almost all the great religion of the world and this mysticism also played an important part in the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

We also have a discussion of the formalities of religion and Gandhi's attitude to them. Gandhi did not give much importance to Temples, idol worship, ritualism etc. Nevertheless he believed that they played a significant role in the early stage of spiritualism. Fasting which was a religious practice was followed for the first time by Gandhiji in social and political matters. In this chapter we also have a reference to Gandhi's idea of salvation.
6.1.3. In Chapter III we have discussed how the political ideas of Gandhi are rooted in religious beliefs. While the prevailing tendency of the time was to separate religion from politics, Gandhi attempted to spiritualise politics. He understood that religion demanded him to participate in the political struggle which he fought in order to establish the rights of the weak and the liberty of the suppressed. It was a sort of *dharmayuddha* (spiritual war). He realised that if he was to seek God in man, he could do so only by removing the obstacles that stood in the way of human rights and happiness. He showed to the world that there was nothing bad about politics so long as it was guided by religious principles. Gandhi chose the path of politics as a means to his own spiritual realisation.

Mahatma Gandhi's greatest success in the political field was due to the method of satyagraha. Satyagraha, we have tried to show, has religion at its background. The qualities which a satyagrahi should possess like purity, sacrifice, truth, justice, fearlessness, courage are universally recognised religious virtues. A satyagrahi is neither moved by pleasure nor by pain, neither by joy nor by sorrow. He is even ready to die for the sake of justice. This reminds us of the Gita's ideal of 'stita-prajña' according to which a person remains unmoved by pleasure and pain alike. Gandhi worked on the fundamental conviction that political freedom was the expression of moral freedom. The principle of satyagraha from one angle would appear to be a restatement
of the ancient Hindu tradition of 'tapasya' or self suffering and 'dhurna' which is a means of securing justice by self sacrifice. But the ancient religious principles of tapasya, self suffering etc. remained confined only to personal matters. Gandhiji used this religious technique in achieving political ends.

Next we have the concept of 'swaraj' or self rule. The word 'swaraj' itself has a reference to the Taittiriya Upanishad. In the Upanishads the perfect soul is described as 'swarajyam' which means 'rule of the self'. In Gandhi's conception of an ideal government, the self rule is the foundation of the political system. Though the achievement of political freedom was the immediate aim of Gandhi's actions it was to be only a stage to a higher end, namely individual, spiritual freedom. Gandhiji used swaraj as a synonym of 'Ram raj'. By Ramraj Gandhiji meant some lofty principles of religion like truth, justice, equity, charity etc. which should be the guiding principles of every state. Moreover according to Gandhi swaraj can be obtained only by practicing the ideal of Swadeshi. Gandhiji believed swadeshi to be a religion and swaraj was an impossibility without a rigorous obedience to this religion.

In this chapter we also have a discussion of the relation between the state and in the individual and the ideal system of government in the view of Gandhi. The foundation of the government...
prescribed by Mahatma Gandhi rests on decentralisation. A man owes loyalty to the state or to the government. But this loyalty is regulated by the conscience of the individual. Thus here Gandhi introduces the religious element of conscience in matters of state regulation. A government which is despotic and which has no heed to the welfare of the common man deserves no obedience, according to Gandhi.

Here we have also dealt with Gandhi's view on rights and duties. In his concept of duty Gandhi owes a great deal to the Hindu religion. According to him the duty towards the fellow being is itself a duty towards God; for God manifested Himself through His creation.

Mahatma Gandhi, consistent with his basic teaching of Ahimsa, is deadly against war. Gandhiji prescribed to the world the non violent technique of satyagraha as a substitute for war. He was well aware of the fact that all the important religions of the world including Islam, Christianity, Jainism and Buddhism are well known for their insistence on peace. Gandhi's belief in the identity of self finds expression in his teaching of the essential unity of mankind. According to him we should strive for a world united by peace and non violence.

In this chapter there is also a critical survey of the political ideas of Gandhi. He was of the opinion that if all the
people become pure and honest the state would become unnecessary. But such a condition visualised by Gandhi is perhaps a far off dream very difficult to realise in actual life. Gandhi recognises the state to be an artificial institution. He fails to appreciate the fact that the state arises out of the moral necessity of human beings. The point that Gandhi wanted to emphasise, perhaps, was that duty to one's conscience and obedience to God are far greater than the dictates of the state. Thus Gandhiji's rejection of the state could be explained in terms of his conception of morality and religion.

6.1.4. Religion which formed the pivot of Gandhi's life also influenced his economic ideas. This aspect has been dealt with in the fourth chapter. Mahatma Gandhi's approach to the economic problems and their solution has been unique. Like other fields of activities he felt that economics too could not be divorced from morals and religion. His economics also rests on the two fundamental maxims of Truth and non violence. The love for his fellow beings prompted Gandhi to uplift the economic condition of the poor whom he called as 'daridrañārayana.' Poverty leads to moral degradation and his first concern was to provide the masses with the bare necessities of life. Gandhi was well aware of the fact that spiritual life is impossible without the minimum economic self sufficiency. However Gandhi made it clear that economic progress should not be achieved at the cost of religion or morality.
Gandhi believed in the age old tradition that dharma (religion), artha (economic), kama (desire) are only the means to the supreme goal of moksa (salvation). Thus though artha (wealth) is indispensable it cannot be an end in itself. The aim of artha or wealth is to sustain the individual in his path towards spiritual realisation or moksa. Gandhi's economic ideas is also influenced by the Hindu and Jaina teaching of 'aparigraha' or non-possession which means abstinence from all attachment. It is considered to be one of the five important vows towards emancipation.

He also believed that the desire for wealth, more than what is required stands in the way of realisation of perfection and a religious life. Renunciation, as a virtue forms the foundation of Upanishadic ethics and religion. These thoughts of the ancient Hindu and Jaina thought are implicit in the economic thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi.

In his economic policy Gandhi was a supporter of the theory of bread labour which meant that everyone should contribute towards earning his bread. A person should feel guilty to consume anything without sharing the labour required to produce it. This thought is implicit in the third chapter of the Gita which is karma yoga where Lord Kṛṣṇa has described the cosmic cycle which should be followed by every individual. Gandhi advocated the principle of minimisation of human wants. Destruction of greed is an important pre-requisite of religious life. Again the principle of equality in the economic sphere, which Gandhi sought to establish is a virtue prized by almost all the great religions of the world. But this
equality should be gained by means of morality and religion. Thus unlike the Marxists, Gandhi prescribes a non-violent way of attaining equality.

In this chapter we have also discussed other important concepts of Gandhian economy like village self-sufficiency. It is a well-known fact that religion and spirituality are closely associated with the villages. Hence Gandhiji tries his best to preserve the strength and beauty of the Indian villages. He visualised a decentralised economic policy which is free from any sort of exploitation. The development of cottage and small scale industries could play a vital role in doing away with exploitation and in the establishment of a non-violent social order. A centralised economy leads to inequality, arbitrary competition and injustice whereas a decentralised economy is the abode of equity and equanimity.

Gandhiji was against the use of machinery and large scale industries which according to him is the source of great and unfair means. He was careful for the preservation of religious values which seem to be threatened in the process of excessive mechanisation.

In this chapter we have also pointed out the significance of the spinning wheel or the charkha from the religious point of view. Mahatma Gandhi got the first glimpse of the spinning wheel in the third chapter of the Bhagavadgita which he himself had confessed. According to Gandhi spinning is the best method of self-purification which in turn leads to spiritual realisation.
The concept of socialism in Gandhi's view has been specially dealt with in this chapter. Here it is shown how his idea of socialism is influenced by his religious outlook in a different perspective. In Gandhi's socialism there was no question of force or violence. The approach towards it was a completely peaceful and nonviolent one.

We have also shown that Gandhi's theory of trusteeship is a restatement of the fundamental principle of asteya and we find a reference to it in the writings of Manu and yajñavalkya.

Lastly in this chapter we have a critical survey of the economic ideas of Gandhi. The economic policy formulated by Gandhi is not free from defects but in spite of these shortcomings it has its far-reaching significance, specially in India because he gave priority to the agricultural sector over the industrial. In India the primary necessity is food and cloth and raw materials for the industries which agriculture can only provide. The point here is that if we review Gandhi's ideals only from the standpoint of economic advancement and competition in the modern technological world it may not come out to be very successful. But his object was to view economic advancement from the standpoint of moral and spiritual advancement. To Gandhi economics is not an end in itself but only a means to ultimate self realisation.
6.1.5. In the fifth chapter we have a discussion of the various activities of Gandhiji in the social field and we have tried to show how each of these ideas have religion at its background. A society, according to Gandhi, should help to promote the personality of an individual in the way to his ultimate self realisation and any norm or principle which stood as a barrier in this respect should be destroyed. This destruction however was to be sought by perfect non violence. In accordance with his belief in advaita, Gandhi believed that the entire human race was one single family and any action or institution which neglected this basic principle was therefore not acceptable. A truly religious man should resist injustice of any kind wherever it was found. In this connection we have also given an account of the historical background of Indian society because the present is closely linked up with the past. A careful study of the thoughts and practices that existed in ancient India has proved the fact that these ideas have exerted a considerable influence in the attitude of Gandhi towards the various social problems.

Then we have a discussion of the concept of an ideal form of society as advocated by Gandhi. To him, it was not enough to gain independence or capture political power, but side by side with the political struggle it was necessary to have an ideal form of society which would fulfill the aspirations of each and every member of the nation. The society which Gandhi wanted to
build up in India was an organic whole where there was no hatred, no conflict and no exploitation of any form. To Gandhi the first concern of the society is to see that every individual has the freedom and opportunity to develop his potentialities. At the same time the individual must learn to adjust himself to the social requirements for the welfare of the society. In this chapter we have also described the ancient system of varnaśrama dharma. Mahatma Gandhi tried to give a new emphasis to the age old tradition of varnaśrama. He used varnaśrama as a means to promote human welfare. Gandhi was of the opinion that this principle of varnaśrama could be offered to the world as the best remedy against heartless competition and greed. Untouchability which has been the greatest menace to the Indian society has been severely criticized by Gandhi. He defended the order in the caste system so far as it is related to one's status in the society but he was deadly against it when it stood for the practice of untouchability. According to him all functions in a society were to be treated with equal respect. Even scavenging as a form of labour was respectable. Gandhiji devoted a great part of his life to remove the practice of untouchability both by precept and example. Another important achievement of Gandhi in the social field was to confer to the Harijans the right of free entry to the Hindu temples. His belief in the essential unity of all creation also manifested itself in his support for cow protection. The word 'Cow
Protection has a much wider significance for it means the protection of the weak, the lowly and the suppressed.

No man in India has done more than Gandhiji to restore the dignity of women in the society. Gandhiji wanted women to take part in politics and have independent thinking. He convinced the people that women were by no means inferior to men. It was only during his time that women came out in large numbers and participated in the struggle for independence. He felt that both men and women are creation of the same God and hence it is unjust and unfair to be cruel towards one section. Gandhiji also stood against other social evils like child marriage, the practice of Sati, drinking alcohol, the dowry system and so on. Gandhiji glorified the ancient Hindu ideal of Brahmacharya because he was aware of the fact that religious or spiritual life is impossible without some amount of self control.

A large portion of this chapter is devoted to the liberal attitude of Gandhi towards other religions. Gandhiji wanted everyone to be tolerant to other religions as all religions are in essence one. In this chapter we have also examined Gandhi's conception of an ideal system of education. Through a proper system of education, Gandhi wanted to produce men physically strong and having high moral and religious virtues. He wanted that the education should be subservient to the primary aim of self realisation. In short, one could note the impact of religion on all the social ideas of Mahatma Gandhi.
6.2.1. Conclusion

The mighty power of spirituality and religion in guiding human life is a well known fact. The political system that is guided by the forces of religion can withstand the most difficult circumstances. If any government, any organisation, any political power or social norm is to command respect it is imperative for it to be ruled by the virtues of religion such as love, sacrifice, humanity, patience, fearlessness and so on. Love and not force is the basis of human life. A system which is based on force is short lived. The fate of Napoleon, the mighty emperor who died a prisoner in the deserted island of St. Helena is well known. Napoleon is remembered as a great historical figure, no doubt, but his achievements does not appeal to our heart as that of Gandhi. To conquer lands, to win wars, to dominate people and attain power is one thing while to work for human welfare, to uplift the poor and downtrodden and to raise the moral standard of the people is another. Mahatma Gandhi stood in the second category and the success that he achieved in liberating the vast Indian empire from the mighty British yoke is a clear testimony to the success of one over the other. Mahatma Gandhi did not have great physical strength though he was energetic and healthy. He was not a rich man either. Professionally or intellectually he was also not very brilliant. But what was that made him one of the world's greatest figures? It was certainly
his unshakable faith in religion which pervaded every sphere of his activity. Gandhi was not a religious saint who preached his religion amongst the society through his 'sishyas' (disciples). But he infused religion in all affairs of life, including the state, commerce and industries. Even today Gandhi shines as the brightest star in the firmament of Indian history with a heroism of soul that knew no bounds.

"Puruṣam Evaṃ Sarvam" — says the Rgveda which means that 'Puruṣa' or the Great Principle pervades the entire world. In place of 'Puruṣa', we say 'Dharmam Evaṃ Sarvam' that is religion pervaded every sphere of Gandhi's life.

The Greatest contribution of Gandhi lay in transforming religion from a system of rituals into a practical code of conduct. The ancient religious texts no doubt emphasised the practical aspect of religion — As has been said in the Manu:

"Vedokhilo dharmamūlam smīle cha tadvidam
Acaraschaiva sadhū nāmatnastutī revача?"

The source of dharma is the whole range of the vedas and also the conduct and traditions of the persons who knows the vedas. Dharma (religion) can be learnt from what the good people do and can be asserted by one's dictate of conscience.

But in course of time people seemed to have forgotten this great truth. The Hindu society had become excessively ritualistic. Gandhiji did much to remind us of this truth.
To put in his own words, "In the name of religion we Hindus have made a fetish of outward observances, and have degraded religion by making it simply a question of eating and drinking. Before the throne of the almighty we shall be judged not by what we have eaten nor by whom we had been touched but by whom we have served and how." According to Gandhi the religious ideals should be practiced in all affairs of human life - social, political and economic. He himself gave a religious colour to every action. From a small deed of writing a letter to the launching of a great political movement, all formed a part of his religious and spiritual pursuit. 'Manav dharma' or man's religion is only another name of Hinduism. It is not advisable to run after other worldly ends. Gandhiji proved before all that through the mundane life, one can attain the spiritual life. This is a new interpretation that he gave to religion.

Another merit of the social, political and economic principles of Gandhi was that he was never dogmatic in his views. It was always open to different interpretations. Mahatma Gandhi's own life was itself an experiment. From Hind Swaraj to his prayer meetings in Delhi we are confronted with different opinions of his own, and the growth of his ideas are quite clear. He did not formulate a fixed system of laws like Marx, Lenin and other great thinkers. The only criteria to which every principle should conform are Truth and Ahimsa. Thus we can formulate an economic system or a political policy if it suits us provided it is
Gandhi's another great contribution in the spiritual field was that he had reconciled the Hindu tradition in the East with the ideas of the West. He had thus bridged, the gulf between the east and the west proving that the common saying 'The east is east, and the west is west and never the twain shall meet' to be false. He brought together the philosophic religion of the East with the idea of civil and political liberty and blended them into a beautiful whole. Mahatma Gandhi was one who rendered the greatest service to the cause of international understanding.

Gandhi, as has already been mentioned, did not derive his ideas from any religion or scripture. It assimilated all that was the best of every religion. The lofty principles preached by the different religions lost its brilliance while passing through different periods. The task of Mahatma Gandhi was only to remind the people of the ancient virtues. No doubt this was a Herculean task, to infuse morality and religion to a nation which was so long under suppression and moral degradation. But India was fortunate to have great persons from time to time who came to her rescue, reminding us of the famous sloka of the Gita.

"Yada yada hi dharma a glani bhavati Bharata
Abhytthanamadharmaya Tadathanam arjaryah nam"
"Whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness rises;
I create myself".

Mahatma Gandhi was indeed born to fight against unrighteousness and establish righteousness.

Today the entire humanity is facing a crisis. The world has become too materialistic resulting in a loss of spiritual values. Everyone is lost in the mad race for money, power and glory. The powerful nations are trying to swallow up the smaller nations. A reign of terror, chaos, confusion, oppression and exploitations surround us. The greatest remedy for all these evils lies in religion. In our time we have seen that the development of science and technology failed to satisfy human minds. The people in the west are now in search of a life which can bring peace and happiness. Many are running after the spiritual life of the East. This is a clear indication of the fact that only religion is the answer to the present catastrophes.

Though religion reigns supreme in India, at present it has become only a myth. Violence, anarchism, disunity and untruthful behaviour are seen everywhere in India. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "If civilization is to survive we must accept that its essence does not consist in power, glory, strength, wealth and prestige but in the free activity of the human mind, in the increase of moral virtue, in the cultivation of good taste and skill in the art of living." If the world is to be saved the
religion ideals should be given the place of highest value for which Mahatma always fought so much so that he died crying out - 'He Ram' which is another name for his religion.

The importance of religion is accepted by even other thinkers who belong to disciplines other than religion. Some thinkers of the west are convinced that the salvation of Europe would not be possible without a spiritual revolution. A great psychoanalyst, Jung, has remarked, "I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among them all - in the second half of my life - there has not been one patient, whose problem in the last analysis was not a problem of finding a religious outlook of life. It is safe to say that everyone of my patients fell ill because he had lost a spiritual ideal. Not one was really healed, who did not regain his spiritual outlook."

In a book called "Future Shock", an American novelist Alvin Toffler has pointed out the horrors that the industrialisation and mechanisation of life has brought about in the modern age. The author has visualised that the world of future has to embrace things of the spirit and slow down the pace of technology if it is to attain peace and prosperity. To quote Alvin Toffler, "Can one live in a society that is out of control? That is the question posed for us by the concept of Future Shock. For that is the situation we find ourselves in ...............
Urbanisation, ethnic conflict, migration, population, crime—are thousand examples spring to mind, of fields in which our efforts to shape change seem increasingly inept and futile."

Even the communist leaders like Lenin and Marx who in principle reject religion unconsciously believe in some form of religion. Their appeals to the virtues of equality, justice and brotherhood are nothing but reference to religious principles at the root. There are only religion in disguise. Their appreciation and adoration of Lenin and Marx is prompted by the religious urge sleeping in their mind.

The best gift which Gandhi presented to the world is his technique of non-violence. Though Gandhi was influenced by the ethical doctrines of Buddhism and Jainism in this respect, he gave Ahimsa an active political content as an instrument for militant social action. By transforming the ethics of suffering from the individual to the social level he gave the doctrine of non-violence a revolutionary intent and direction.

A scientific testimony as to the superiority of non-violent resistance has been furnished by biologists. They have shown how even, where the law of the jungle prevails it is the meek that inherit the earth. It is said that when two timber wolves engage in a fight, the weaker one who is beaten offers undefended the most vulnerable part of his body—the bend of his neck—to his enemy. Mr. Konrad, Z. Lorenz, the great naturalist
describes it as follows, "Every second you expect violence, and await with bated breath the moment when the winner's teeth will rip the jugular vein of the loser. But the victor will definitely not close on his less fortunate rival, you can see that he would like to, but just he cannot. A dog or wolf that offers its neck in this way will not be bitten seriously."

Though this may be a simple case of mechanical reflex and not any high philosophical principle, still it is non violence that wins here. Illustrating the truth of the saying, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5.) Today though many countries posses atomic bombs, the chance of an atomic war is rare because people by heart cannot at once think of such ghastly violence.

The relevance of Gandhi's thoughts is an important topic of discussion in recent times. A person with an attitude of dislike for Gandhi, may readily find hundreds of criticisms against him. But instead of taking Gandhiji as a 'Mahatma' or a saint whom we expect to be hundred per cent perfect, it is better to take him as an ordinary being who is liable to a few mistakes now and then. Apart from a few shortcomings here and there, Gandhi's thoughts are quite relevant. He gave to the nation a direction, an aim, a way of life. From politics to personal conduct, from economics to aesthetics, there is no single field in which Gandhiji had not left his mark. The impact of his thoughts are greatly felt in present day politics. A band of his
followers like Vinoba Bhave, Jayprakash Narayan made an attempt to revive Gandhian ideals. The present governments always make a pledge to implement Gandhian ideals but how far they translate it into practice is a debatable issue.

The impact of Gandhi's thoughts finds a clear manifestation in the framing of the constitution of India. The impact of his philosophy and religion is clearly evident from the preamble, the fundamental rights and Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution.

Gandhi's fight for the emancipation of the Harijans resulted in Article 17 of the constitution of India for abolition of Untouchability and Article 46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy for promotion of educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the community and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The promise to "secure to all citizens of India Justice - social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation" are basically the ideas emphasised by Gandhi.

The fundamental Rights in part III of the constitution constitutes one of the areas approximate to Gandhian ideology.
to usher in an era of political democracy or swaraj. A code of written Civil Rights for the Indian citizens appeared as an innovation. Protection of minority interests, religious and cultural freedom were some of the items circulated by Gandhi in the second session of the Second Round Table Conference. His views found place in the Right to freedom of Religion (Arts 25 - 28) and Culture and Educational Rights (Arts 29 - 30) in the constitution to promote secularism. His demand for equality and elimination of exploitation and discrimination resulted in Articles 15, 16 and Arts 23 - 24. His fight for the removal of untouchability resulted in Article 17.

For bringing about economic and social democracy, the Directive Principles of State Policy was a major step. It was to be brought about through village industries (Art. 43), compulsory education for children (Art. 45), Prohibition (Art. 47), living wage for workers (Art. 43), ban on cow slaughter (Art. 48) etc.

The incorporation of major Gandhian principle in the constitution was on the Panchayat. According to this directive: 'The state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government' (Article 47). Articles 45 and 46 dealing with the provisions for the free and compulsory educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of the community can be termed as Articles bearing perceptible vibration of Gandhian ideology.
Some writers however opine that a half-hearted compromise had been achieved in framing the constitution of India by incorporating some of the ideas and principles of Gandhi. These ideas and principles found prominent expression mostly in Part III and Part IV of the Indian Constitution - more in the non-justiciable, non-enforceable Directive Principles of State Policy than in the justiciable and legally enforceable Fundamental Rights.

This does not however mean that Gandhi and his views lacked supporters but it was mainly due to some differences of opinion between Gandhi and the younger generation of intellectuals and socialists of the Indian National Congress.

The present movement in Assam on the foreign nationals issue became successful by its strict adherence to the path shown by Gandhiji. Hundreds of people especially young students smilingly rode into the jaws of death for the sake of their cause. The success of the Assam Gana Parishad in the recent election to the Assam Assembly and the Parliament who carried out the entire student movement in the peaceful, non-violent manner points out to the success of Gandhiji's method even in the present age.

If we want to build up a society in the Gandhian model, religion is the first necessity. Gandhi gave his precious suggestions in almost every field of human activity. We have already discussed the relevance of some of his important ideas. All of those ideas may not be fully applicable in the present day society but they do indicate a direction towards which we should
move. He infused morality in the dirty field of politics and made it clear that the first and foremost consideration of the government lay in the welfare of the individuals forming the society. He strove to improve the condition of the poor by glorifying the concept of bread labour. To him goes the credit of the destruction of many evils that poisoned Hindu life and society. It may be necessary, no doubt, to modify some of his ideals in the light of the present day society. Gandhi did not claim any rigidity for his methods and policies. He was not against modification of some of his principles to suit the conditions of any situation provided the direction remained the same. It is for the present day thinkers and politicians to examine his ideas and make the best use of them. For successful implementation of the Gandhi's ideas a total moral transformation of the people is necessary. For example if the theory of trusteeship is to be successful in the economic field, the honesty of the trustee is an indispensable condition. In matters of politics if the best form of government is that which governs the least, the people under that government should be fit enough to be their own governor. If untouchability is to be completely eradicated and social equality is to be maintained, everyone should have a faith in the maxim "All men are brothers". To be brief, the success of Gandhi's ideas today would depend on how much the people have progressed ethically.
By showing the impact of religion on the thoughts of a great leader like Mahatma Gandhi, we can safely point out that if the leaders of today are influenced by similar virtues of religion, it will go a long way in reducing the present crisis in India. Political life as we find today stands blind to all religious values. Our society is spiritually sapped. Our age needs politicians who are not merely motivated by the considerations of power and economic gains but by human considerations. Gandhi tried to emphasise this particular point to bring about a peaceful condition of human existence. It is expected that the Gandhi technique will bring about a revolution in the near future if not immediately. Since the end of the second world war, the world has shown many examples of the success of ahimsa against tyranny and injustice. The negroes of the United States is a glaring example. This non-violence may be like a few tiny drops in the vast ocean of violence. There is no doubt, that these drops, however tiny they might be is sure to create a mighty influence and is a way to the great renaissance of the human world. We are proud of the fact that it is India, where Gandhi who taught such a great gospel was born and largely because it is the Indian religion and teaching which is at the background.

References
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5. Religion and Society by Dr. Radhakrishnan, p. 66.
7. Future Shock by Alvin Toffler, p. 466
8. King Solomon's king by Konrad, Z. Lorenz 1155, pp. 186-97