CHAPTER- 5
5.1: Introduction:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi a political and spiritual leader of India was born in Porbander in the state of Gujarat on 2 October 1869. Gandhiji is a constant stimulant of Indian life in general. His immense influence on speech, thought and action of Indian life is beyond question. “His name is familiar to such a degree that there is scarcely a peasant or a factory worker who does not consider him to be a friend of human kind.” In this regard Louis Fischer remarks that if man is to survive, if civilization is to survive and flower in freedom, truth and decency, the remainder of the twentieth century and what lies beyond must belong not to Lenin or Trotsky, not to Marx or Mao or Ho or Che, but to Mahatma Gandhi. E. M Foster observes that Gandhi “had his roots outside time, and drew strength thence” In the history of mankind there have been great saints, philosophers, thinkers, scientists, statesmen and political leaders whose contributions in their own fields have been outstanding. But Gandhiji was unique, because while he was actively leading a mass struggle for freeing his country from foreign rule, he conceived swaraj at once in individual and political terms and tried through reflection and experiment to
evolve a philosophy of life which would have permanent validity.

Gandhi was not an academic philosopher in the usual meaning of the term. His basic concern was to remove all sorts of sufferings of human life. Gandhi was not interested to establish any ism through his work. In this regard he says, “There is no such thing as ‘Gandhism’, and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have tried in my own way to apply the central truths to our daily life and problems.”

Gandhiji’s life and teaching have a universal appeal. He was essentially a religious and a moral force appealing to the conscience of man. He did not make any distinctions between religions, nations or races. Thus Gandhiji became the great internationalist, believing in the essential unity of man and the underlying unity of all nations. Albert Einstein opines “Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood, walked upon this earth.”

Gandhiji’s whole life was patterned on the lofty teachings of the Gītā. These teachings according to him, are such as can be easily understood and enforced in one’s life by all to whatever race or religion they may belong who are humble in spirit and who have fullness of faith and undivided singleness of mind. It is because Gandhiji had all these qualities in an abundant measure that he succeeded so well in attaining his life to the highest truths laid down in the Gītā. Satyagraha as developed, perfected and applied by Gandhiji, has no parallel in the world, it has been such an inspiring force and an elevating influence that it has transformed the lives and conduct of millions
and millions of people throughout the world and made of them men in the real sense of the world. According to Gandhiji “What I want to achieve- What I have been striving and pining to achieve these 30 years- is self realization, to see God face to face, to attain Mokṣa. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to the same end.”5 “The purpose of life as declared by Gandhiji is to know oneself and the ultimate aim is to realize God. “Mahatma Gandhi infused life into some of them (Indian philosophical concepts) by coming across them in the very course of his life, which is a struggle for the discovery of truth.”6 The knowledge of self and the realization of God he holds to be impossible unless one has learnt to identify oneself with all that lives and serves the whole of God’s creation. Gandhiji said that the only way to see God is to see Him in His creation through service and by feeling one with it.

5.2: Analysis:

Life is an aspiration. Its mission is to strive after perfection which is self-realization. The ideal must not be lowered because of our weaknesses or imperfections. Gandhiji says “I am painfully conscious of both in me. The silent cry goes out to Truth to help me to remove these weaknesses and imperfections of mine. I own my fear of snakes, scorpions, lions, tigers; plague stricken rats and fleas, even as I must own fear of evil-looking robbers and murderers. I know that I ought not to fear any of them. But this is no intellectual feat. It is a feat of the heart. It needs more than a heart of
oak to shed all fear except the fear of God. I could not in my weakness ask the people of Borsad not to kill deadly rats and fleas. But I knew that it was a concession to human weakness. The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our, chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within."

Gandhiji’s was influenced by the religious individualism of the Indian philosophical tradition. As such his view of liberation is developed in the light of Indian philosophical tradition. Gandhi tried to incorporate individualism with that of universalism through his concept of liberation. Gandhiji holds that freedom from birth through the realization of the supreme Reality is mokṣa. For Gandhiji mokṣa means “deliverance from having to assume the endless succession of various bodies and from the resultant suffering.”

He strongly believes that the aim of human life is mokṣa. Mokṣa is nothing other than freedom from birth, by breaking the bonds of the flesh, and becoming one with God. Salvation or liberation means destruction of the shackles of birth and death, escaping from that cycle, and deliverance from evil. “For Gandhiji unwearied ceaseless effort is the price that must be paid for turning that paid into rich infallible experience. The Gītā says that without any equivocation that the experience is not to be had without divine grace. We should develop swelled heads if Divinity had not made the ample reservation.” In this connection Gandhiji holds that amidst the all creatures of the world, it is only
man who has the capacity to worship God or Truth with the best of his knowledge and devotion. It is devotion to God which may result in the attainment of liberation. Gandhiji believes, by virtue of his nature each and every man is capable of attaining the perfect state of his life; in which he may realize the presence of God within himself. Gandhij says, "I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else." True understanding of God or truth may bring moksha or salvation for the aspirants. Liberation is the state of true happiness. Without salvation, it is not possible for a man to enjoy true happiness.

Salvation or moksha is the ultimate spiritual goal of Gandhiji. By moksha Gandhiji means relief from the cycle of births as well as deaths. In this regard Gandhiji said that if he had any passionate desire, it was only to reach the God, if possible, at a jump and to merge myself in Him. He believed that the body persists because of egoism. The total extinction of egoism is moksha. Gandhiji believed in the necessity for ceaseless effort in this spiritual adventure, but he also believed in the need for grace to crown the effort with success. Whenever an impure thought arises in the mind, it should at once be confronted with a pure one. This is again possible only with the grace of God. That grace can be obtained by repeating His name all the twenty four hours and by realizing that He resides within us.
through society because he believes in the absolute oneness of humanity and therefore to him there is complete identity between him and humanity. According to K. S. Bharathi, "Gandhiji emphasizes the spiritual nature of man and he believes in the exercise of free will as well as the effect of environment. According to him, the *summum bonum* of man's life is self realization."\(^{11}\) Gandhiji holds that there is no contradiction between God and man, as well as in the lower order of creation. Soul transcends time and space and unifies all apparently separate existence. He also believes that human beings are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of spiritual identity. The problem of the ultimate standard of morality and ultimate end of life are interwoven into one another. The realization of the self- the harmonious development of our whole nature- is a favourite topic of the moral scientists, both Western and Eastern. William Lillie observes perhaps aptly "In immortality, as the phrase self-realization reminds us, the perfection with which we are concerned is the perfection of the individual self, and every individual counts"\(^{12}\)

An ardent desire for the realization of God or that perfect being of whom we are only sparks is present through Gandhian thought. It is this faith that perfect Being or God being latent in us, we can realize Him bit by bit through self discipline. Gandhiji says, "I am beadily led nearer to it by constant prayer"\(^{13}\) He believed in human perfectibility, with certain limitations, from the core of his heart. We should try our utmost to realize the *summum bonum*, the ultimate goal of our life. Of course, Gandhi is fully conscious of our inherent
imperfection. But this natural limitation would not obstruct our way to perfection. By dint of ceaseless efforts men should bring out their potentiality, more precisely perfection in its full bloom. To quote him, “Man will ever remain imperfect, and it will always be his part to try to be perfect.”

Buddhabev Bhattacharyya here comments, “He knew that man at the present stage of his being was not perfect, but that did not negate the theoretical possibility of further development which amounted to his perfectibility. This idea of human perfectibility is a key point for the philosophy of non-violence.” Indeed human perfectibility is a part and parcel of Gandhi's philosophy of life. Throughout his life he was in search of it. The ever-developing nature of human beings is the *élan vital* of perfectionism. Gandhi believed, at least, in the theoretical perfectibility of every human being. Any man may undergo reformation and thereby attain perfection by ceaseless self disciplinary efforts. But this optimism is shaken owing to inherent imperfection. That is why Gandhi urges not to give up our attempts to realize it. He says, “We shall ever fail to realize it, but shall never cease to realize it.”

Gandhiji never considers liberation as a mere concept. For Gandhiji liberation is a fact and it should be realized in this life or in some other births. We can grasp a part of the meaning of *mokṣa* or liberation and the rest can only be experienced. For the attainment of liberation one should have to follow the path of *ahimsā* or non-violence with firm determination and constant effort. In this regard to quote Gandhiji “Mukti is a fact to realize which
I am striving with all my might."17 For the attainment of liberation Gandhiji gives utmost stress on selfless service for humanity. He believes that selfless service towards humanity may pave the way of liberation. The ultimate destiny of human being is attainment of self-realization which is not other than perfection of life or liberation. “Because of his weaknesses or imperfections, man should not lower the ideal of moksha or liberation. Liberation becomes easily attainable for man when he endeavours to proceed with a renunciatory spirit, that is, when he makes himself free from all kinds of attachment and delusion.”18

For Gandhiji those who come nearer to perfection of life with his constant effort may be the man to be greatest. “The goal”, observes Gandhiji, “ever recedes from us. ...Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment. Full effort is, full victory”19 Gandhiji always suggests man not to be desperate at all in his service towards perfection, all though he might find the goal to be far away from him. Contentment can be experienced by man in his effort but not in his attainment. Gandhi describes his life as a life full of joy in the midst of incessant work. “I have all I need without slightest care of having to keep any personal treasure. ... In not wanting to think of what tomorrow will bring for me, I feel as free as a bird.”20

We know that Truth is used by Gandhiji in two the sense that is to say in the sense of end as well as in the sense of means. For Gandhiji realization of the absolute Truth is the ultimate end of human life. The absolute
truth is to be attained by means of the observance of relative truth through the action, speech as well as in the thought of an individual. In this regard Gandhiji says "The deeper the search in the mine of truth, the richer the discovery of the gems buried there." 21 When the individual realizes the absolute truth for him nothing is left out for him to be known in this world. It should be the duty of each and every individual to follow truth through his life. In the way for the search for truth with selfless and honest effort man has nothing to be lost. The man must associate himself with the relative truth till his realization of the absolute Truth. Because in his search for absolute Truth the relative truths will be the stepping stone through which the individual may move gradually towards the absolute Truth. Gandhiji says, "We realize Brahman in the Brāhmī state; and if it is attained, we are not overpowered by ignorance again, or we can never be deluded again. A person who is in this state at the time of death attains brahma-nirvāṇa or liberation. There are two possibilities here-either one attains the state at the moment of death, or one attains the state and exists in that state till the moment of death." 22

By mokṣa Gandhiji mean freedom of the soul from the bodily bondage. In the state of liberation the atman is freed from the bodily bondage. According to Gandhiji there are two types of liberation, "One is destruction of one's body, after which, however, the necessity of being born again and again remains as ever. The other nirvāṇa is brahma-nirvāṇa, which is a state of void. But the void is in regard to the external world; within it is all
Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious; have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in his creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. Gandhiji says, “I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, and so inert that I must concentrate myself on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I could find Him in a Himalayan cave I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity”.24

T.M.P. Mahadevan and G.V.Saroja rightly remarks that in order to analyze Gandhiji’s concept of mukti it is necessary to give the various definitions of the terms wise-one, yogi-guṇāṭā, etc., as defined by Gandhi and to describe some of his experiences. Gandhi describes “the knower of self, one who has realized the Self, as having the sky as the only roof, living in a jungle and looking upon snakes and scorpions as his friends.”25 “The one who has given up all desires and is free from the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, is unconscious of his embodiment and escapes from all concerns”.26 “He who lives with the knowledge that his body is not his, that God makes it dance as He wills, may be said to have realized God. All karma done in that spirit is akarma. Such a person loses very consciousness of his body.”27 A yogī who has attained freedom is
the one “whose \( \text{atman} \) is filled to perfect contentment with such \( jh\text{\=a}na \) and \( vij\text{\=a}na \) and dwells firmly like \( K\text{\=u}\text{\=ta} \). He is a \( K\text{\=u}\text{\=t}\text{\=a}\text{\=stha} \) who endures blows, as the anvil does by remaining unshaken by extreme suffering, and has subdued his senses completely.” 28 “The yogi has controlled his mind, is completely free from all desires, and sees the \( \text{atman} \) through the \( \text{atman} \), lives forever content in the \( \text{atman} \). Gandhi also asserts that a man of unceasing love is a perfectly enlightened man.” 29 “A person who has risen above the \( gu\text{\=nas} \) is one who has become a cipher. A burnt rope cannot be used for connecting or binding things or drawing water from a well. The \( gu\text{\=p\=a}t\text{\=i}ta \) is like such a rope. Just as the rope produces the illusion of a snake, such a man may be viewed by others as an inert stone or a disinterested man. But he is not affected by such views.” 30

Gandhiji’s view of liberation may said to be a necessary corollary of his belief in immortality of soul. In this regard Gandhiji says “The ultimate goal of our life is the realization of self, God or Truth…….The soul survives after the destruction of the body like a Phoenix, and merges in the infinite bosom of God or Truth.” 31 It is here noteworthy that the concept of immortality of the soul plays a subtle yet important role in Gandhian thought. It kindles a burning inspiration in the mind of satyagrahi’s to sacrifice this body and life, and thereby realizes the virtues. Gandhiji believes in the immortality of the soul. He would like to give the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water, each drop is an entity and yet it is part of the whole, “the one and the many”. In this ocean of life we are all little drops. It
means that one must identify himself with life; with everything that lives, that he must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum total of this life is God. According to Gandhiji, “Human society is a ceaseless growth, and unfoldment in terms of spirituality. If so, it must be based on ever-increasing restraint upon the demands of the flesh. Thus, marriage must be considered to be a sacrament imposing discipline upon the partners, restricting them to the physical union only among themselves and for the purpose only of procreation when both the partners desire and the prepared for it.”

Gandhiji holds that what chiefly distinguishes man from the beast is that man from his age of discretion begins to practice a life of continual self-restraint. God has enabled man to distinguish between his sister, his, mother, his daughter and his wife. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then at the same time, expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one’s hand in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt. He, therefore, who is resolved to control the one, must be likewise determined to control the rest. Gandhiji has always felt that much harm has been done by the narrow definition of brahmacharya. If we practice simultaneous control in all directions, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success. Perhaps the palate is the chief sinner. Nevertheless there is that difference between a belief in ahimsa and a belief in himsā which there is between north and south, life and death. One who hooks his fortunes to
ahimsa, the law of love, daily lessens the circle of destruction and to that extent promotes life and love; he who swears by himsā, the law of hate, daily widens the circle of destruction and to that extent promotes death and hate. There is so much superstition and hypocrisy around, that one is afraid even to do the right thing. If one gives away to fear, even Truth will have too be suppressed. The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right. Hypocrisy and untruth will go on in the world. Our doing the right thing will result in their decrease, if any, never in their increase. When we are surrounded by falsehood on all sides, we might be caught in it and begin to deceive ourselves. We should be careful not to make a mistake, out of our laziness and ignorance, Constant vigilance under all circumstances is essential. A votary of Truth cannot act otherwise. How beautiful it would be if all of us young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do, in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking, or playing till pure dreamless sleep claimed us for her own. God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price. May he be so to every one of us.

In Indian tradition two types of liberation is recognized namely, jivanmukti and videha-mukti. Gandhiji holds that, jivanmukti or mukti while one is still alive is an impossible idea. For Gandhiji an individual at best may said to be fit for liberation, a man who would attain videha-mukti or deliverance after death. Those who can attain the state of liberation become able to free him from the cycle of rebirth. The necessity for deliverance sustains
so long as the connection of the self with the body remains. The survival of the body will continue if the atman does not cease to exist. According to Gandhiji, “If we move out hand, the mind is bound to move too. If we completely withdraw the mind from the body, the latter should become as the burnt silken thread, only the form surviving. Some attachment is bound to persist while our bodies are capable of motion.” The hot passions and the cravings of the senses may be withdrawn only when the ego cease to exist in the body.

5.4: Path of Liberation:

The Supreme state of God realization or freedom could be reached through an elimination of egoism. Progress on this path is indicated by obvious transformation of conduct. “If a man grows morally stronger day by day, and his eyes cast off all passion, it is phenomenon that becomes self evident and does not require anyone to test it. It makes itself felt automatically.”

Wisdom through love and action- that epitomizes the message of the Gita, which it was the constant endeavour of Gandhiji to re-live in his own life that has been described as an embodiment and enactment of the Gita’s teaching. Vincent Sheean remarks: “If we are to consider the Gita under the aspect of prophecy, which should be legitimate for any religious scripture, then the selfless warrior created by its burning words, the hero of the righteous battle and fulfillment of the Lord Sri Krisna’s injunction was Mahatma Gandhi. These (the inspired words) seem to me to refer more precisely to Gandhi than to any other figure
I can discern in the long pageant of Indian History. His interpretation of it therefore, in terms of non-violence, acquires the value of life rather than the value of literature; he lived the Gita in non-violent times. That was his interpretation and he proved it by his hero’s death. Just as life transcends letters, so the Gandhi-Gita triumphs over the unanimous dissent of the scholars by the dramatic perfection of the life given to it.35

But how is one realizing this Truth? For Gandhiji truth can be realized by single-minded devotion (Abhyās) and indifference to every other interest in life (Vairāgya). Silence is a great help to a seeker after Truth. In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in clear light, and what is elusive and deceptive, resolves itself into crystal clearness. Out life is along arduous quest after Truth, and the Soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech. He will measure every word. God is the very image of determination or vow. God would cease to be God if He swerved from His own laws even by a hair’s breadth. We cannot realize Rāma by reading the Ramayana, or Krishna by reading the Gita, or Allah by reading the Koran, or Christ by reading the Bible; the only means of realizing them is by developing a pure and noble character. Character is based on virtuous action and virtuous action is grounded on Truth. Truth, then, is the source and foundation of all things that are good and great. Hence, fearless and unflinching pursuit of the ideal of Truth and Righteousness is the key of true health as of all else.
The question naturally is asked as to which of the three approaches to God—Jñāna, Bhakti, and Karma? Gandhiji preferred for himself the way of Bhakti and Karma—of complete surrender to God, and unceasing selfless service of men. For Gandhiji “we must completely surrender ourselves to him for the attainment of mokṣa. It is for God to take our broken barge across the stream, but it is for us to put in our best effort. It is for us to plug a hole in its bottom or, if water gets into the boat, to throw it out. In that case the barge will keep floating despite the hole. But it will float only when there is God’s hand behind it. It would therefore; say that man must make an endeavour and for the result depend on God’s grace.” 36 In this regard Gandhiji says, “I cannot attain freedom by a mechanical refusal to act, but only by intelligent action in a detached manner. This struggle resolves itself into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free.” 37

5.5: Satyagraha:

To win political freedom Gandhiji find out the technique of Satyagraha. The technique of Satyagraha is used by Gandhi for attainment of spiritual freedom also. Literally Satyagraha means clinging to Truth. But by Satyagraha Gandhiji means something more that is to say truth force or soul-force. To quote Gandhiji “Truth is soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soul-force.” 38 But it should be note worthy to mention that Satyagraha has a significant meaning in the life every individual. Political freedom for Gandhiji
is only a means towards the attainment of spiritual freedom. In this regard Gandhiji say, “My patriotism is for me a stage in my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace.” Gandhiji believes that for attainment of the ultimate destiny of man i.e. highest spiritual end Satyagraha may be considered as the guiding principle.

Gandhiji holds that for the purification of his soul a man should acquire moral virtues in order to become a true Satyagrahi. Satyagraha presupposes the cultivation of all kinds of moral virtues in the person offering it. As Satyagraha is the pursuit of Truth, for the attainment of Satyagraha firm determination is utmost necessary. Satyagraha is a spiritual quality that inheres in the personality of human being. “Satyagraha”, as it is observed observes Gandhi “is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in everyone of us. Like Swaraj it is our birth right.” Gandhiji holds that a living faith in God is the first requirement for a Satyagrahi. Truth and ahimsā should be considered by a Satyagrahi as his creed. For the growth of perfect human personality Satyagraha is a must. “As I know it”, Gandhiji remarks, “to be correct - the greater the spirit of Satyagraha in us, the better man will we become. Its use, therefore, is, I think, indisputable.” A Satyagrahi must develop a firm belief within himself on the potential goodness of human nature. Man may realize his hidden goodness of his nature in true perspective through his constant effort for the sake of Truth and ahimsā.
5.6: Ahimsa:

Ahimsā implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible. Man for man the strength of nonviolence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the nonviolent person to inflict violence. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e.; the power at the disposal of a nonviolent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. For Gandhiji, “The end of violence is surest defeat. The ultimate end of nonviolence is surest victory if such a term may be used of nonviolence. In reality where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.”

Non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul-free or the power of Godhead within us. Imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that essence? He would not be able to bear its full blaze, but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within us, can work wonders. The sun in the heavens fills the whole universe with its life-giving warmth. But if one went too near it, it would consume him to ashes. Even so, it is with Godhead. We become Godlike to the extent we realize non-violence, but we can never become wholly God. Gandhiji says, “Non-violence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth, acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true non-violence
acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society." It is another matter that our non-violence has not reached such heights. It would be wholly wrong for us to lower the standard of *ahimsā* by reason of our own fault or lack of experience. “Without true understanding of the ideal, we can never hope to reach it. It is necessary for us, therefore, to apply our reason to understand the power of non-violence.”

5.7: Intuition or Inner Voice:

There come to us moments in life when about some things we need no proof from without. A little voice within us tells us that we are on the right track, move neither to our left nor right, but keep to the straight and narrow way. Gandhiji says, “There are moments in your life when you must act, even though you cannot carry your best friends with you. The ‘still small voice’ within you must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty.” For attainment of self-purification a ceaseless effort to be made by the individual and he has to develop the capacity to hear correctly and clearly the small voice within. In this regard Gandhiji says, “I shall lose my usefulness the moment I stifle the still small voice within.” Again for Gandhiji, “Penances with me are no mechanical acts. They are done in obedience to the inner voice.” An individual may not believe on others but he must believe himself. A seeker of *mokṣa* must try to listen to the inner voice, but if he will not get the expression “inner voice”, he may use the
expression “dictates of reason”, which he would obey, and if he will not parade God. Gandhiji has no doubt that the individual will parade something else which in the end will prove to be God, for, fortunately, there is no one and nothing else but God in this universe.

Gandhiji also submit that it is not everyone claiming to act on the urge of the inner voice that has that urge. Like every other faculty, this faculty for listening to the still small noise within requires previous effort and training. Perhaps much greater than what is required for the acquisition of any other faculty, and even if out of thousands of claimants only a few succeed in establishing their claim. It is well worth running the risk of having and tolerating doubtful claimants.

5.8: Desireless Service:

Man’s ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious; have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. To quote Gandhiji “My creed is service of God and therefore of humanity.” Gandhiji holds that we are a part and parcel of the whole, and we cannot find him apart from the rest of humanity. For Gandhiji, “To serve without desire is
to favour not others, but ourselves, even as in discharging a debt we serve only ourselves, lighten our burden and fulfill our duty. Again, not only the good, but all of us are bound to place our resources at the disposal of humanity. The duty of renunciation differentiates mankind from the beast. He strongly believes that the countrymen are our nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resource less, so inert that we must concentrate ourselves on serving them. If we could persuade ourselves that we should find him in a Himalayan cave we should proceed there immediately. It is a fact that we cannot find him apart from humanity. Gandhiji says, “For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there through of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives.” Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men. Gandhiji wrote “My life is an indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another; and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind.”

5.9: Fearlessness:

According to Gandhiji “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 or giving offence, and so on.” True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for us and in fearlessly following it. We must give up all external fears. But the internal foes we must always
fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger, and the like. External
fears cease of their own accord, when once we have conquered these traitors
within the camp. All such fears revolve round the body as the centre, and
will, therefore, disappear as soon as one gets rid of attachment for the body.
We thus find that all external fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. In
this regard Gandhiji says, “Fear has no place in our hearts, when we have
shaken off the attachment for wealth, for family and for the body. Nothing
whatever in the world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. When we cease to
be masters, and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the
very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like must; we shall attain
ineffable peace, and see Satyanārāyana (the God of Truth) face to face.”

For Gandhiji just as one must learn the art of killing in
the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for
nonviolence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering
the means of combating the cause of fear. Nonviolence, on the other hand, has
no cause for fear. The votary of nonviolence has to cultivate the capacity for
sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He racks not if he
should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear
cannot practice ahimsa to perfection. The votary of ahimsa has only one fear,
which is of God. “The pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path
that leads to God, and, therefore, there is no place in it for cowardice, no place
for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to life
eternal." He who seeks refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the Atman that transcends the body; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable Atman one sheds the love of the perishable body. Training in nonviolence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. In this regard Gandhiji says, "Violence is needed for the protection of things external; nonviolence is needed for the protection of the Atman, for the protection of one's honour."

5.10: Self-Purification:

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification. God can never be realized by one who is not pure in heart. Love and Ahimsa are matchless in their effect. But, in their play there is no fuss, show, noise or placards. They presuppose self-confidence which in its turn presupposes self-purification. According to Gandhiji "Men of stainless character and self-purification will easily inspire confidence and automatically purify the atmosphere around them." Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream. God can never be realized by one who is not pure in heart. Gandhiji says "Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's
surroundings. But the path of purification is hard and steep. To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech, and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. According to Gandhiji “I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant, ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world’s praise fails to move me; indeed it very often stings me. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms.”

Gandhiji observes that never own defeat in a sacred cause and man should make up his mind henceforth that he will be pure and that he will find a response from God. But God never answers the prayers of the arrogant, or the prayers of those who bargain with Him. If we would ask Him for help, we should go to Him in all our nakedness, our approach to Him should be without reservation, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help fallen beings like us. According to Gandhiji “He who helped millions who have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exceptions whatsoever and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. The prayer of even the most impure will be answered. I am telling you this out of my personal experience; I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you.”
5.11: Brahmacharya:

Brahmacharya is a mental condition. The outward behavior of a man is at once the sign and proof of the inner state. He who has killed the sexual urge in him will never be guilty of it in any shape or form. However attractive a woman may be, her attraction will produce no effect on the man without the urge. Brahmacharya is not a virtue that can be cultivated by outward restraints. He who runs away from a necessary contact with a woman does not understand the full meaning of brahmacharya. According to Gandhiji “The true brahmachari will shun false restraints. He must create his own fences according to his limitations, breaking them down when he feels that they are unnecessary.”

The first thing is to know what true brahmacharya is, then to realize its value and lastly to try to cultivate this priceless virtue. Gandhiji holds that true service of the country demands this observance. For Gandhiji “Life without Brahmacharya appears to me to be insipid and animal-like. The brute by nature knows to self-restraint.” Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises self-restraint. What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of Brahmacharya in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience. Gandhiji write “I hold that a life of perfect continence in thought, speech and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. And a nation that does not possess such men is poorer for the want.”
For Gandhiji the observance of bodily brahmacharya has been full of difficulties. Today an individual may feel fairly safe, but he has yet to achieve complete mastery over thought, which is so essential. Not that the will or effort is lacking, but it is yet a problem for us where from undesirable thoughts spring their insidious invasions. Gandhiji says, “I am experimenting. I have never claimed to have been a perfect brahmachari of my definition. I have not acquired that control over my thoughts that I need for my researches in non-violence is to be contagious and infectious, I must acquire greater control over my thoughts.”

Gandhiji has no doubt that there is a key to lock out undesirable thoughts, but every one has to find it out for himself. Saints and seers have left their experiences for us, but they have given us no infallible and universal prescription.

Gandhiji made it clear that perfection or freedom from error comes only from grace. So, seekers after God have left us mantras such as Rāmanāma, hallowed by their own austerities and charged with their purity. Gandhiji says, “Without an unreserved surrender to His grace, complete mastery over thought is impossible. This is the teaching of every great book of religion, and I am realizing the truth of it every moment of my striving after that perfect brahmacharya.”

Gandhiji said that he has practiced brahmacharya for over thirty years with considerable success though living in the midst of activities. In this regard Gandhiji says, “My brahmacharya was not derived from books. I evolved my own rules for my guidance and that of those who, at my invitation,
had joined me in the experiment. If I have not followed the prescribed restrictions, much less have I accepted the description found even in religious literature of woman as the source of all evil and temptations. Owing as I do all the good there may be in me to my mother, I have looked upon woman, never as an object for satisfaction of sexual desire, but always with the veneration due to my own mother. Man is the tempter and aggressor. It is not woman, whose touch defiles man, but he is often himself too impure to touch her. From that day when I began brahmacharya, our freedom began. My wife became a free woman, free from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from the slavery to my own appetite, which she had to satisfy. No other woman had any attraction for me in the same sense that my wife had. I was too loyal to her as husband and too loyal to the vow I had taken before my mother to be slave to any other woman. But the manner in which my brahmacharya came to me irresistibly drew me to woman as the mother of man. She became too sacred for sexual love. And so every woman at once became sister or daughter to me.**65**

Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing brahmacharya. Gandhiji feels that this conception is incomplete and wrong. Brahmacharya means control of all the organ of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all others free play is bound to find his effort futile.
5.12: Estimation:

Gandhiji’s concept of liberation was influenced by various schools of philosophy and different sects of Hinduism. By *Mokṣa* Gandhiji means relief from the cycle of births as well as deaths. In this regard his view of liberation influenced by traditional Indian philosophical tradition. Again most of the activities and teachings of Gandhiji were influenced by the fundamental doctrines of Hinduism. More particularly he was influenced most by the teaching of *Bhāgovadgitā* and the Upanishads. By following *Upaniṣadic* view of liberation Gandhiji explained liberation as relief from bondage as well as the state of highest moral transcendental purity. Again Gandhiji holds that the means are important than the end. Gandhiji preferred for himself the way of *Bhakti* and *Karma*- of complete surrender to God, and unceasing selfless service of men. We cannot attain freedom by a mechanical refusal to act, but only by intelligent action in a detached manner. In this connection he followed the Gita’s theory of karma to solve the problem of means and end. By following theory of the Gita Gandhi recognized the significance of selfless action for the realization of Mokṣa.

Like Swami Vivekananda Gandhi also worshiped *Daridranarayan*. While Swami Vivekananda preached Neo-Vedanta for regeneration of Indian community, Gandhi presented plans to make this ideal a reality. Gandhi called himself a Hindu first and last. He was Indian through and through. Gandhi’s influence over Indian masses was not because of his ideology
but because he was their true representative, struggling for their destiny. In every country there are followers of truth and nonviolence. All these followers directly or indirectly owe their inspiration to Gandhi.

Gandhi has synthesized religion and ethics, as he opines that ethics does not preclude religion. A seed in the form of ethics does not give out a sampling unit it is watered by water in the form of religion. As soon as we leave the moral basis we cease to be religious.

Gandhi considered ahimsa, Brahmacharya, Control of palate, non-stealing, bread labour, fearlessness etc. as preliminaries for liberation. Most of these principles have been found in Hindu Sastras, but Gandhi has interpreted some of them in his own novel way and thereby giving them a new connotation. In his concept of liberation Gandhi holds that for self realization a moral discipline is utmost necessary.

Gandhi neither advocates absolutism nor relativism but synthesizes both the two. For Gandhi reality is truth and truth is reality. Again for Gandhi truth is god and truth is non-violence, non-violence again is truth. Thus truth and non-violence are reality and reality is God. Gandhi stated that we cannot see face to face truth through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body, because Truth is eternal. The finite human beings can never know it in its fullness. Gandhi holds that even if one can achieve relative truth he should be satisfied, because the more he achieves it the nearer he is to reality. In this sense Gandhi neither advocates absolutism nor relativism but synthesizes both
Gandhiji may also be characterized as the follower of mysticism, but his mysticism is full of realism. By following Indian tradition he believed that the world has a moral order and therefore man must obey ethical principles for the attainment of his destiny.

Gandhiji upheld determinism in his philosophy of religion and same is reflected in his concept of liberation also. Gandhiji firmly believed that every mission in human life is God given. It is God who impels us to do whatever we are doing. Even our disappearance can not be called an evil result. It means that He wishes to get His work done through other instrument of His will. God the Omniscient knows everything through and through. Gandhiji stated that we are at the disposal of the Almighty. The Almighty may take us away if He wills. If God has finished with the use of this body, none can save us. On the other hand, if the Almighty still wants to use it none can kill me. This observation shows that God is the determination according to Gandhiji. We must be submissive to the God. This may lead us towards the realization of the Truth.

Indian philosophical tradition recognized jivanmukti. But it is interesting to observe that in his concept of liberation Gandhiji reject the possibility of jivanmukti. Gandhiji very emphatically holds that jivanmukti or mukti while one is still alive is an impossible idea.

Gandhiji's view of liberation is also influenced by humanistic thought. Like the humanists Gandhiji upheld the view of redemption
and regeneration of man. But it should be noted worthy that Gandhiji’s humanism was spiritual humanism. Gandhiji holds that none can find God apart from humanity. It is possible only by means of service of all. He had firm conviction that service to humanity is the service to God. The highest service to man will be our sincere endeavour for drawing out the divine nature in man. To gain this end, we have to be in communion with God and to worship him as the source of all our noble virtues. The essence of spiritual humanism as enunciated by Gandhiji is to stress the significance of the universal values in man.

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