Prior to going into any observations and conclusion, I would certainly want to discuss some selected but definite contributions that the Mahatma made to the world. Some of his contributions are particularly significant and of tremendous importance to any Indian who strives to be an Indian, and any Hindu, who longs to be a Hindu.

One thing must be borne in mind. The entire life of the Mahatma was filled with political activities. The period in which he lived demanded such an attitude from him. As a result, most of his contributions do carry the context of political activities - apart from the cultural and religious connotations which are natural to him. Thus it is necessary to give a brief note on man, politics and religion, which can function as a prelude to the Gandhian concepts of Swadeshi, Swaraj, Satyagraha etc.

The Mahatma was a seeker of truth 'Satyanweshi'. Any one who ventures after truth has to involve himself in every sphere of human existence. A society has many
institutions. It is only natural for a truth seeker to involve him in every institution that society floats. Politics too is a very important social institution. It is only natural for one to be political if he is mentally and socially active. I am not forgetting the professional politician of our present time, who make a living out of politics and who finds politics very lucrative; much paying. They may be termed pests; it is true that their numbers are overwhelming; but there still are genuine politicians among these swarming pests. The Mahatma indeed was a genuine politician par excellence. He was a saintly politician, whose moksha depended on doing good to others politically; which had become the Karmayoga in Gandhi.

Religion and Politics

We hear a lot about mixing up of religion with politics in our present day. Many people seem to say that religion must be delinked from politics. This view holds some grounds when religion is used for political ends. But it shall be very unrealistic to stake claim for delinking religion from politics. Any one who makes such entry towards delinking religion from politics does not understand what religion is, or at least making a mistake by confusing between religion and religiosity. It is religiosity that gives birth to varying forms of terrorism. Religion, as I
have already stated in my previous chapters, is “the fundamental intentionality of human consciousness towards the sacred and attempts towards the hermeneutics of the sacred.” Religion exists as a structure to man’s consciousness and it cannot be de-linked from man’s very being. Religion is co-existing and co-terminius with man. Man in his varying existential situations had attempted for the hermeneutics of the sacred; and such attempts found varying expressions in varying human existential situations. This accounts for the multiplicity among the phenomena of religion; but they are all essentially one and the same. The differences with many religious phenomena are very superfluous and superficial.

From this one thing could be derived. Religion is an all pervasive phenomenon. It cannot be delinked from any institution of human society.

The Mahatma wanted to introduce religion into politics. He had rightly identified religion as the only powerful agent to moral and ethical political existence. Religion is the only correcting factor to corrupt politics. In democracy political corruption is always wide spread, though it is less intense as compared to other forms of governments. The real cause of corruption is “human factor” only, the erring human factor. Man could internally
be cleared only through religion, no other factor could be so powerful. The only force that can fight the force of evil is the force of goodness or Godness from religion. The Mahatma knew this very well, and made all effort to introduce religion and spirituality into politics.

Unfortunately, our rulers had not followed the path shown by the Mahatma. Our rulers had made no serious effort to any form of religious instructions. In fact many major countries in the world are carefully giving religious instruction in their curriculum right from schools to Universities. In India, the thoughts towards religious instruction suffer from a preliminary handicap. Our leadership was always bound through the constitutional thoughts of “secularism.” We treated secularism as a holy cow; never wanted to burn fingers by touching the constitutional provision of secularism.

Perhaps this was only natural for many Indians. Religion had already played havoc with us, our nation was divided in the name of religion and even the Mahatma failed to stop the division of India. The indelible mark of the division of our nation shall always be an increasingly painful matter of thought to all of us. It may be because of this that our leadership didn’t want to do anything with religion and they turned blindly secular. This blind
secularism acquired a very seriously negative connotation. Secularism practically became equal distance from all religions instead of equal respect to all religions. Secularism in the former sense is dissuading oneself from religion, that necessarily alienate one's own self. Such Indians with such attitude suffers from self estrangements.

Of late, changing political scenario brought about changes in the ruling government. Some people today seem to understand the importance of religious instructions. Some people who are our present rulers make some efforts to provide some rudimentary form of religious education. But then our erstwhile fetishism with negatively conceiving secularism strikes very hard at all such attempts towards any religious instructions as well as re-structuring of curriculum. For the right minded rulers, it indeed is a formidable challenge and Herculean task.

The Mahatma was very clear in his conception about religion. He says: "My work of social reform was in no way less or subordinate to political work. The fact is that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-
purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work."

The equation here becomes very simple his social work is intimately related to his political work and his political work is well based on his religious authenticity. For the Mahatma political power is never an end: it is only a means to enhance as better the existing social conditions. Thus political power has only instrumental value, it functions to translate religious values into society.

The concept of Swaraj

Swaraj literally means home rule or self government more than being a political one, the concept is ethical moral and indeed philosophical. In fact, the concept of Swaraj is a relative concept. Swaraj stands in relation to "pararaj", the rule by any alien or outsider.

Through the concept of swaraj the Mahatma was imparting the much needed courage to Indians. The subcontinent was reeling under pressure from the rule of foreigners, who wasted no opportunity to suppression. Only a handful of Indians had the courage and strength to resist the foreign rule, which by definition was unjust. To translate the full connotation of the concept of swaraj, the
inner strength of Indians had to be re-awakened. It required much self-esteem, self respect and impeccable pride in being an Indian. It was only natural for the Europeans to try to prove that they are a better lot; their superiority just by virtue of their very being, and they left no stone unturned. The Indian really had to rise from the very gutter to find his own Indians and then to look into the eyes of the foreigner in equal terms or more.

To translate the concept of swaraj into action the Mahatma had to do this and more. There is no forgetting that personalities like Swami Vivekananda had already laid the foundation for what the Mahatma resorted to venture. Swaraj needed all these and more; and in a word, the undoubted superiority of Indian culture and Indians above the European culture and civilization.

The Mahatma says:

Let there be no mistake about my conception of swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence and at the other the economic. It has two other ends..... moral and social.... Let us call this the square of swaraj, which will be out of shape if any one of its angles is untrue.²
Naturally, the Mahatma was aiming at total and complete independence in all aspects. If any one aspect is missing, then independence becomes empty, or meaningless. Further explicating the meaning of swaraj, the Mahatma adds:

“Self-government depends entirely upon our internal strength: upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name.”3

From swaraj, the Mahatma had great visions for India. The Mahatma knew pretty well that in tomorrow’s World India will be playing an important role for which there shall be no substitution from any quarter. We can see his futuristic visions in the following lines.

“I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual, being free, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.”4
Truly, what India has to offer to the world is something unique. Let us say that in a future world, where the world shall be what is known as a global village: every nation shall be making their contributions to the common pool as well as receiving from the common pool. Scientifically and technologically advanced nations shall easily be offering their technology etc. What India can offer to the common pool is something absolutely unique and indeed rare; and that is spirituality. In a soul less world of terrorism when the western man is exhausted in all technical terrorism, he will have to come to India to find his own true-self, his essence his spiritual being to delineate himself from his erstwhile material culture's clutch. But then, when that really happens, India must remain unadulterated and in glorious form. Indeed, every Indian ought to work through his living life to approximate such a goal. The tenets of this conception can well be traced in Gandhian thoughts.

Plato had a clear-cut vision of an Ideal State, the Mahatma had only a vague vision what an ideal state ought to be. He was very clear about one thing the guiding principle of an Ideal State ought to be “Ahimsa,” non-violence. History tells us that states are born through bloodshed. The entire history of Europe stands witness to this. State born through unscrupulous bloodshed cannot
enjoy peaceful existence there cannot be any principle of Ahimsa. India's peaceful existence was originally damaged by Alexander: but it was only a short lived aggression. Real trouble started with the rise and spread of Islam and the Arab invasion of Sind, Multan etc. The Arab invasion by Mohammed-Bin-Qarin was only the beginning of a long series of invasion by foreigners upon India. Finally India was under the Mughal rule, which got replaced by the British. All these nations came to exist through much bloodshed and unscrupulous political diplomacy. Obviously, warring tribes, Arabs, Mongols, Turks, Mughals or Europeans; cannot dream of a state based on the structure of Ahimsa and Karuna.

But for the Mahatma, Ahimsa was the edifice of an Ideal State. As per the spiritual background of India he had no difficulty in finding out a name for his Ideal state. The Mahatma called his ideal state "Ramarajya."

Rama is an ideal to any average Indian mind. Rama is viewed as the embodiment of all human qualities; that are sublime. Rama is called "maryada purushottam. In Rama, all the great masculine qualities are found. Infact, he is a perfect incarnation (Sampoorna Avatar).
Rama is seen as an avatar of Lord Vishnu. But his importance is not just his divine background, as there are many other avatars of Vishnu. But the Ramavatara transcends all other avatars as he is “maryada purushottam.” The importance of Rama can be summed as follows: Rama represents archetype Indian psyche. Rama is the Indian symbol; the one symbol that can substitute all other symbols. The practical significance of Rama, the political importance of Rama, the moral importance of Rama and the spiritual importance of Rama, they all are uniquely significant to Indian mind in an untold manner.

When the Mahatma had named his Ideal State as “Ramarajya,” he was only being natural, spontaneous what other name could he ever think of?

Marx seemed to have left some impression on Gandhi. Obviously the Mahatma could not have had any thing to do with the dialectical materialism. of Marx; but in so far as Marx remained a humanist and not a revolutionary the Mahatma might have been curious.

Modern Marxists makes a distinction between humanist Marx and revolutionary Marx. Basically, the distinction comes from Althusser. They rather disown
humanist Marx; calling him ideological. For them revolutionary Marx is scientific and wanted.

The humanist Marx seems to have created some impression on Gandhi. Gandhi became interested in ideals such as classlessness, enlightened anarchy etc. He says:

"Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self regulated, no representation is necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state therefore there is no political power because there is no State."^5

Marx himself was very ambitious about classlessness, statelessness and lawlessness. Marx says that once the objective law shall be the same as the subjective law (he calls it the inner law of reason), there shall not be any contradiction between the objective and subjective laws and under such conditions state can wither away. The Mahatma was influenced by that ideal.

The end of 19th century proved the total and miserable collapse of some very important Marxian
concepts. His theory of class failed. Then failed the theory of class war classlessness naturally remained a myth. The entire Marxian theory, in spite of its unconditional support from the Judaic media (they owned most of the press) could not be upheld as plausible. Germany rejected Marx as they were an advanced society but the backward Russians gave importance to it. The Mahatma soon shuns the impressions of statelessness.

In the ancient days people respected the sage. In modern times a 'sage' is a person who has education, a spirit of service and the qualification of rendering service in the largest measure. A man of this type will not seek power: but the people of their own desire will elect him and invest him with power because they will realize that he is indispensable. 6

Gandhi appears hopeful of a Ramarajya though many power hunting politicians around. were against it. At every step, it is interesting to note that the Mahatma was taking refuge in ancient Indian culture for more and more practical solutions. In a word, Gandhian democracy is nothing other than a modern version of ancient “janarajyas” and Gandhian socialism is nothing other than a conjecture construct from the philosophy of Vedanta.
Swadeshi Concept

Swadeshi is a concept much used by the Mahatma. Swadeshi; self-reliance or taking pride in one's own desa had to be stressed upon for a struggle for freedom from the rule of the British. How can a society without self respect launch any legitimate struggle against aliens? It is true that the Muslims had destroyed several temples and looted them; the Muslims had forced religious conversions on Indians, (the choice was between death and Islam), the Hindu scholars literally ran away from Muslim rulers to jungles; but the Muslims could do nothing to destroy the Hindu pride and spirit. They could never make an intellectual invasion on the Hindu spirit for one simple reason that they were neither intellectually equipped nor cunning. Their aggression was physical and never mental. As a result the Hindu mind was never enslaved, it remained powerful throughout history.

Let us now revisit the theory of Aryan invasion. For this, let us take the term "Aryan." The term Aryan has its origin in Sanskrit. Like many other sanskrit concepts such as Brahmin, Kshatriya etc; Aryan is also a connotative concept. Take the case of the concept of Brahmin. No body is born a Brahmin. According to the theory
"janmana jayate sudra
karmana jayate dwija"

All are born sudras, but one becomes a dwija (which means born again) only through Karma. The case of Viswamitra is the best example he is born as a “Bharadwaja” which is supposed to be a Brahmin gotra. But through Karma he became a Kshatriya. But later when he wanted, he sanskritised himself had to become a dwija a Brahmin. In short, Brahmin is a connotative concept; one becomes a Brahmin by acquiring certain pre-set qualities. The concept of Aryan is also a connotative concept; Aryan simply means a person who had acquired such and such qualities. It is a respecting term; we call one as Arya to offer respect to mean “Shreshta”, or the refined one.

The swadeshi movement of Mahatma was an antithesis to this and the Mahatma has a long list of predecessors on this account. The earliest tenets of a concept of swadeshi that is explicit is found in Vishnu Gupta or Chanakya. The context was Alexander’s invasion. It was Chanakya, an achariya or professor of Taxila University who went from states to states unifying India against the alien aggression. It was he who first asked the Indian to wake up from slumber; his words were “Uttishta Bharata.” Unfortunately this spirit of unity was later lost
because of the over confidence of princely states, and that gave India away to foreign rule. But then the undying Indian Spirit was always powerful though latent, found expression through many leaders. Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, Swami Vivekananda etc. were only some such names.

Swami Vivekananda’s call for awakening was simply following the spirit of Chanakya. Guru Gobind Singh organised an army of Surdas through the Sikh religion. There were many such people, Gokhale and even up to Rishi Aurabindo.

The Mahatma’s Swadeshi concept is thus not an isolated one. It comes from the fully established and tremendous stage settings of such powerful ancestry. Through the theory of swadeshi the Mahatma was trying to show Indians where they ought to be standing in history. In fact, he was simplifying ancient thoughts which were valued much by the Indians and was trying to put it into social action. The Mahatma brought the thoughts down to a very material level of common social living. Through the concept of swadeshi, he asked people to buy only commodities locally produced. He asked people not to buy but boycott foreign goods. He offered the simple argument;
if we don't buy what our brothers make, then who will buy them?

"Not to be able to serve our own neighbours, our own kith and kin - to wrest a morsel from their mouths and put it into those of strangers, surely this would not be serving the higher end of life, this would not be compassion. That would only mean our deserting our own field of duty."7

Gandhi favoured the production and sale of swadeshi goods, and compelled the Indians to use it discarding their higher cost and inferior quality, the cost may be more though it may not be of good quality, we must use only swadeshi goods. Going for Videshi is a double edged knife: on the one hand it snatches the bread from our fellow brethren and on the other hand if further strengthens the alien aggressor and colonial ruler.

"To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly, and a negation of the swadeshi spirit."8

Now swadeshi does not mean that we hate or dislike foreign producers. It is also not indiscriminate rejection of
all foreign products. The environment and condition of our
country is suited for manufacturing certain things, that we
must locally consume and reject foreign made such
products. But it won’t be possible for us to start
manufacturing units to substitute all foreign goods; which
shall only put us in deep difficulties. That would only
destroy the slowly awakening Indian Spirit of self-reliance.
So swadeshi is not an indiscriminate rejection of all foreign
goods.

Means and End in the Mahatma

In Indian tradition, the ultimate end - purpose - or
goal of human existence is Moksha. In English, moksha is
translated as liberation. Liberation from what? It is
liberation from the vicious circle of birth-death and re­
birth. One who fails to attain moksha is again born to strive
and perfect himself to realising the goal of Moksha. Until
the ultimate end moksha is attained, the process of birth­
death and re-birth shall be an on going phenomenon. The
concept of moksha depends on the concept of self the real
nature of self. In reality self is one with the ultimate
reality, Brahman. We do not realise this due to “avidya” or
ignorance. Self’s becoming that ultimate reality is moksha
and the end-purpose of living.
Though the end is same, Indian tradition prescribes many means to that end. Bhakti is one marga or means, Karma is another marga and similarly there are means like Tantra, jnana, purusharthas etc. There are many means to that end, and if one is capable of finding the correct means he can reach the end without any difficulty. Unlike in the Semitic religions, liberation is attained purely through human efforts in all Indian religions. God really has no part to play in it.

The Mahatma was not a philosopher he was much concerned about the means to the end. There is considerable amount of confusion in Gandhi about the transcendental and the empirical means and ends. He mixed up socio-political existence with the transcendental man. As a result, the Mahatma was struggling in terms of purity of means.

I would say, 'means are after all everything.' As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between the means and the end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.
As another result of this confusion the Mahatma is setting up temporary end on earth prior to the real end that is Moksha. For him, the temporary end is Ramarajya.

Of course, the Mahatma’s sincerity and honesty towards human betterment through emancipation is well known, but his philosophical confusion remains. The fact that he is an original thinker with no real training in philosophy may explain such confusions.

**Satyagraha**

The most important concept in Gandhi could be seen as Satyagraha. His whole personality is translated into action through this single, unique concept. The Mahatma’s entire moral strength, inner strength based on deep rooted spirituality his tremendous will to fight injustice, his firm adherence to ahimsa, his love for truth etc. all gets transformed both into thought and action through this one single concept of Satyagraha.

Indeed it shall be worth knowing how all these started and how satyagraha came into existence as a practical philosophy for the world.
On October 11, 1906, the Indians in Transvaal, South Africa, under the leadership of Gandhi, solemnly determined not to submit to the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance of the Transvaal Government. This Ordinance later came to be known as "The Black Act," in which Gandhi "saw nothing...except hatred of Indians" and which according to him was "designed to strike at the very root of our (Indians') existence in South Africa. Gandhi felt that by degrading the innocent Indians in South Africa the Ordinance humiliated not only a few Indians but India as a nation. We are innocent, and insult offered to a single innocent member of a nation is tantamount to insulting the nation as a whole. Thus the dignity of the individual as well as the prestige of a whole nation was at stake. And the Indians resolved never to yield a cowardly submission to such a degrading legislation, and to fight non-violently and without hatred to vindicate their rights and regain their self-respect. In the absence of an appropriate name the English phrase "passive resistance" was first employed to describe the non-violent direct action of the Indians in South Africa against the government there. "None of us knew," wrote Gandhi, what name to give to our movement. I then used the term 'passive resistance' in describing it.

"Passive resistance" did not fully express the implications of Gandhi's movement and was found to be
misleading. So in the course of the search for an appropriate nomenclature Maganlal Gandhi suggested the word “Sadagraha,” meaning “firmness in a good cause.” Gandhi changed it into Satyagraha:

“I liked the word (Sadagraha), but it did not fully represent the whole idea I wished to connote. I therefore corrected it to ‘Satyagraha.’ Truth (Satya) implies love, and firmness (agraha) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement ‘Satyagraha,’ that is to say, the Force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence, and gave up the use of the phrase ‘passive resistance,’ in connection with it, so much so that even in English writing we often avoided it and used instead the word ‘Satyagraha’ itself or some other equivalent English phrase.”

Satyagraha is adherence to truth. It is not mere passive adherence to truth; it is active and even aggressive (morally) insistence on truth. The Mahatma is of firm faith that the entire world has truth as its very foundation and the world exists on truth and truth only. He says that:

“The world rests upon the bedrock of satya or truth. Asatya meaning untruth also means non-existent and satya or truth also means that which is. If untruth does not so
much as exist, its victory is out of the question. And truth being that which is can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of Satyagraha in a nutshell.”

For the Mahatma, Satya or truth is God Himself. Living according to Satya, or following the path of truth is nothing other than following the path of God. Thus, the Mahatma also gives a divine connotation to his newly found action plan. He also gives a picture of a true satyagrahi.

“(One) who out of his loyalty to truth, to his nature as a spiritual being and out of a desire to obey God’s command, submits to the suffering inflicted by wicked men, with fortitude in his breast, with a smile on his face and without a single tear in his eyes.”

Thus, Satyagraha becomes a way of life, and a relentless and ongoing search for truth.

On no account, Satyagraha is a passive concept. It is very much of an active, in fact aggressively active concept. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth. While it is an ongoing search for truth, it is also a relentless and ongoing struggle against untruth and fight against evil. Satyagraha is the most powerful weapon to fight evil and anything that veils truth.
The Mahatma blends in two additional concepts in his concept of satyagraha. One is the concept of Thyaga or sacrifice and the other, the concept of suffering. Through these additional concepts, he proposes to capture the hearts of the oppressors. The Mahatma lays heavy faith on the psychological phenomenon of identity. In so far as one is human, what happens to another human being also happens to the on looking human being internally. There is an unconscious identifying of one with another human being in so far as one is human. He puts it in the following manner.

"Things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason ... if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head but penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner, understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword."13
Satyagraha can assume various forms. It is akin to a huge tree having many branches. An important branch of satyagraha is non-cooperation based on ahimsa. Any amount of coercion and oppression won’t deter a satyagrahi from his path of truth; path of righteousness. From non-cooperation, the aggressor will be at a loss to know how to react to such a situation.

“Satyagraha in the political field assumes the form of civil resistance. It was for this form of Satyagraha that Gandhi was known to the world intimately. The originality of Gandhi consisted in applying the method of Satyagraha on a wide scale to the sphere of politics. He made it a “complete substitute for violence of war” and claimed originality and authorship for it. Gandhi first used H.D. Thoreau’s expression “civil disobedience” to describe his method. However, he emphatically denied that he borrowed the doctrine of Civil Disobedience from H.D. Thoreau: The statement that I had derived my idea of Civil Disobedience from the writings of Thoreau is wrong. The resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before I got the essay. Later Gandhi found that “Civil Disobedience” failed to convey the full meaning of his struggle. Hence, he adopted the phrase “civil resistance.”
The term ‘civil disobedience’ was first used by Thoreau. I didn’t like it because it didn’t suggest all that I had in mind. Looking for a new phrase. I fixed upon ‘civil resistance.’ The current phrase was ‘passive resistance. But my way of resistance or the force which I had in mind was not passive. It was active, but ‘active’ might also mean violent. The word ‘civil’ suggests nothing but non-violence. I, therefore, joined it with ‘resistance.’

Civil resistance based on ahimsa against an evil regime can totally disable the ruling government no matter how great their military power had been. But it is absolutely necessary for a civil resister to have tremendous determination and inner strength. The Mahatma speaks about the attitude that a civil resister ought to assume.

"Shower what suffering you like upon we will calmly endure all and not hurt a hair of your body. We will gladly die and will not so much as touch you. But so long as there is yet life in these our bones, we will never comply with your arbitrary laws."  

The Mahatma introduces yet another weapon into the armory of a Satyagrahi, and that is the atom bomb of fasting. A satyagrahi becomes so strong internally and he abandons food for the cause. His fast unto death makes him
gradually walk towards his death. Again, the previously stated psychological phenomenon takes place here. If the oppressor is even slightly conscious, each time he take meals or take snacks, his convince pricks him that because of me some one is starving, his stomach must be burning with hunger. But fasting being the strongest weapon like the Brahmastra it must be used only as a last resort when all other alternative is proved to be a failure.

"It is the last weapon in the armory of the votary of ahimsa. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts.... The effect of such action on the life of people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened."  

Surely, fasting is not a weapon for the masses to use. It can only used by very select few of people. It calls for much more determination, inner strength, moral uprightness, readiness to sacrifice and unconditional willingness to take tremendous suffering upon oneself.

The Mahatma lays much emphasis on the training for satyagraha. He believes that the capacity to satyagraha can only come from proper education. Proper education is not merely stuffing up one's mind with varying form of knowledge; it is rather unfolding of one's own self. One
may recall the kind of education that Plato had thought of. In Plato, the knower is the self or the soul. The soul need not to learn something at all, since the soul belongs to the world of Ideas and knows everything from the world of Ideas which is the real world. Education is only the process of re-discovering or unravelling of what the soul had already known from the world of Ideas. Plato very smartly quotes the story of Socrates and the slave boy, where through giving answers to the questions of Socrates, the illiterate slave boy learns a very complicated mathematical theorem. The slave boy already knew it from the world of Ideas, Socrates only unravelled it.

To the Mahatma, education is the process through, one finds out himself or his true self. It is only through realising one’s truly divine self that one can acquire necessary strength moral and spiritual strength of a satyagrahi. But this can’t be done without a proper teacher or Guru. What is most essential in learning from a Guru is absolute faith in Guru and respect to him; which is called Gurubhakti. Both learning and teaching is a divine process like lighting of lamp from lamp and Gurubhakti is an essential, inseparable ingredient to it without which learning shall only be a shallow, empty and futile exercise. The Mahatma says:
"I am a believer in 'gurubhakti'... In character-building, which is the object of education, the relationship between the guru and his disciple is of utmost importance and where there is no gurubhakti in its pure form, there can be no character-building."17

The Guru churns the character of his student and brings out what is beautiful in a student. He brings out what is true Good and beautiful in his student. At this point the Mahatma borrows from the Gurudev; Rabindranath Tagore and says that:

"Truth is goodness and beauty"

"Satyam Shivam Sundram"18

In India, philosophy had always been a way of life. For the west, philosophy remained essentially in the realism of thoughts and speculation; but in India it was a way of life. Fidelity to Indian tradition one may call it the Mahatma too was living his philosophy. Whatever he said, he practised; before asking others 'to do' something, he himself had done it and proved to himself one could do such things. The Mahatma was a transparent and integrated personality and indeed this was his greatness.
Relativity of Truth and Morality

The Mahatma had definite views on the meaning and purpose of life. Obviously, his views were certainly based on the Hindu view of life. Undoubtedly the Mahatma was a legitimate Hindu and that was why he could be so broad-minded and could maintain a universal world view. Philosophical Hinduism does not support any narrow theology in any sense. Naturally, the Mahatma depended totally on this traditional background of his.

The Mahatma was just saying things as it used to occur to him. He did not make his philosophical background or on whose thought he was epistemologically depending on. As a matter of fact he himself wasn’t aware of the knowledge structure that was influencing him. Thinkers like Jiddu Krishnamoorty, Rajneesh the Osho etc. are all such personalities. They were not system builders; they were not exponents of any particular philosophy. They were not addressing philosophers, they were speaking to common people, and the things which they said were to be comprehended on the level of common sense. As this being the case, to deconstruct or dig into their expressions indeed is a mere impossible task.
The Mahatma called himself an advaitin. He was truly influenced by Sankara Vedanta, and at the same time the Visishtadvaita of Ramanuja. His very concept of “Ahimsa” is essentially a direct result of Buddhistic thoughts, and the influence of Jainism expresses itself through staunch vegetarianism. Some people say that the Mahatma was a blend of all these and if we accept the blend theory, it indeed was an unhealthy blend. ‘Semblance’ is the word which could be used instead of word ‘blend.’ However, one must always remember that unlike J.Krishnamoorty and Rajnesh, the Mahatma had no formal training in philosophy. He was talking common things to common people in a common way. Thus, to revisit the Mahatma epistemologically becomes a formidable challenge indeed.

For him reality was sat, which is satya (truth) and he identified it with God. He used the concept of God with capital ‘G’ and not small ‘g.’ Indeed this can’t be a philosophical position at all and it is a great task to provide philosophical explanation to it.

The Mahatma claims that no one or group has claim on the absolute truth. Truth is much internalised in individuals. Further, there is practical morality for every individual. Here, each individual has to have his own moral
judgment. Each individual has to have thus truth internalised.

“No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is therefore meant that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be.”

This view has a plus point. For each action and judgment, the individual concerned himself alone is responsible. He cannot evade or shift responsibilities for what he thinks and does. Here an individual has freedom, but he must also be accountable, responsible.

God and Religion

The Mahatma was a person clearly observed with the idea of Good. He carried impeccable faith in God and demonstrated this from time to time. At times we find him speaking about God in personal terms and at times in impersonal terms. When it comes to the question of God in the Mahatma his lack of philosophical training becomes conspicuous. Philosophically he involves in series of contradictions but strangely, for the Mahatma, he
experienced none of such inconsistencies. It may either be due to his lack of conceptual clarities, or may be due to the hypothesis that he had transcended such contradictions. But a student of Gandhi who approaches his concepts is surely going to face tremendous problems. Some times the Mahatma justifies personal God as he says that common folks used such a concept.

"Personality is a limitation, and yet only a personal God can be worshipped. Personality implies the distinction of self and non-self, and hence is inapplicable to the being who includes and embraces all that is. The personal God is a symbol, though the highest symbol of the living God. The formless is given a form, the impersonal is made personal, the omnipresent is fixed to a local habitation; the eternal is given a temporal setting. The moment we reduce the Absolute to an object of worship, it becomes something less than the Absolute... Hence to meet the demands of both popular religion and philosophy the Absolute Spirit is indiscriminately called He or It."

However, it is plausible that the Mahatma himself did not believe in personal God. Rather, from the Hindu background, any one with a little thought can't take the question of personal God seriously. The Mahatma was greatly influenced by Gita and yet, at times he really
wanted to visualise a personal God. About such a
dichotomy, the Mahatma says:

“The qualities we attribute to God with the purest of
motives are true for us but fundamentally false, because all
ttempts at describing him must be unsuccessful. I am
intellectually conscious of this and still I cannot help
dwelling upon the attributes of God. My intellect can
exercise no influence on my heart. I am prepared to admit
that my heart in its weakness hankers after a God with
attributes.”

Some thinkers and students of Gandhi want to believe
that there is no difficulty in Gandhi when he maintains such
dichotomy. They make a distinction between transcendental
God concept and empirical God concept. They want to
amount personal God as empirical one and metaphysical
God as transcendental. Thus they try to make Gandhi’s
theism comparable to the monistic philosophy. TMP
Mahadevas says:

“While it is true that Advaita seeks to go beyond
theism, it is not to be confused with atheism or anti-theism.
The supreme Reality is absolutely unconditioned; it is
super-personal. But it appears as if personal in order to
serve as the ground of the universe, and as the object of
adoration for man. Thus, God is greatly significant for the Advaitin... The place of God in Advaita is neither pernicious nor precarious; on the contrary, the concept is quite pertinent to, and precious for, Advaita-experience.”

G. Soares says:

“Very probably, Gandhi had no very precise notion of God, and, like Hinduism as a whole, continually oscillated between a monistic Brahman which seemed to satisfy the exigencies of reason and a more or less theistic Hari who alone could satisfy the demands of the heart.”

Of course, such interpretations shall have to face serious epistemological problems. When God by definition is transcendental how can one speak about an empirical God and be sure that there is compatibility? It is as good as speaking about the ‘empirical transcendental’ reality. Given symbolic logic, it is as good as saying that $p \land \neg p$ is true.

It is on the basis of the concept of truth that the Mahatma formulates his concept of religion. For his truth is transcendental. In so far as religion is committed to truth, they all are one and the same only. Further, he visualises a ‘perfect religion,’ that is totally committed to truth, although he maintains that no particular religion is perfect.
religion. All religions carry truth but not total truth. All religion are same, there cannot be the question of superiority or inferiority among them.

The Mahatma was indeed very religious but certainly was not a student of religion. In fact modern studies of religion emerges much after he had left us; and he was not aware of the analytical studies conducted in many departments of religion the world over. Therefore, the Mahatma’s conception of religion may appear very shallow to present days students of religion. But then the important thing with the Mahatma is his fidelity to truth and sincerity in being religious. His attitude to all world religions is essentially that of a true religious person. His respect and appreciation to other religions came from the fact of his being true religious. Unlike the attitude that of a student of religion which is intellectual and epistemological, the Mahatma’s attitude was indeed spontaneous, true and sincere. We must not forget that the Mahatma was certainly not involving himself in an academic epistemological exercise.

**Spiritual Humanism**

Indeed, the Mahatma was a humanist par excellence. It is not surprising that his concept of human being and the
universe itself is absolutely based on the philosophy of the Upanishads. Man and nature, both are reflections of the ultimate reality. Atman is Brahman itself; and differences at the level of human existence can only be spurious. Atman exists in various bodies; but it do evil mean that there are different atman. There is only one atman the Brahman, the ultimate reality. According to S.Varma:

“When he (Gandhi) equates Truth with God he tries to identify the essence of every being with the source of everything, viz., God. It is an ontological equation of Nature and Man and of both of them and God. It is this unity which is the major pursuit of the Upanishads and Gandhi re-echoes it.”

Though the Mahatma had no training in philosophy, he had really internalised the philosophy of Vedanta. We find him un-philosophical often times, but it is interesting to note that on a final analysis he remains a Vedantin. In other words, the words of Gandhi could only come from a Vedantin, the world view of the Mahatma is essentially that of a Vedantin, and the humanism propounded by the Mahatma is based on Vedanta, which makes Gandhian humanism a spiritual humanism.
The essential goodness in man

“Man has within his breast an impulse for good and a compassion that is the spark of divinity, and which some day, I believe, will burst forth into the full flower that is the hope of all mankind... An example of this flowering may be found in the figure and in the life of Jesus.”

Like many philosophers, the Mahatma believed that man is essentially good. His intrinsic nature is goodness only. Evil and selfishness can only come to him as artificial additions. It takes an effort on the part of human being to tell a lie; but to speak the truth is spontaneous. Similarly it is natural to be good, but one has to be crafty, cunning and plotting to be bad. Given the view of hedonistic philosophy that man is a pleasure seeking animal, he can’t take extra pain in being artificial. Man really works hard and struggles to be evil, bad and selfish for reasons he thinks shall do him good. If not, why must man struggle and take extra pain to be evil?

The essential goodness in man comes from the fact that man is essentially divine. The atman or self in man is actually one with the ultimate reality itself. Differences are illusory maya. Therefore, it is only natural that the basic
nature of man is essential goodness. How can this be logically different or otherwise?

**Man-centrality and Moksha**

The man centeredness in the thoughts of the Mahatma is a natural phenomena. Man centrality in the Mahatma is directly borrowed from the man centrality of Hinduism and other Indian religious as compared to the semetic religions and their God centrality. The man centrality in Hinduism and God centrality in semetic religions must be properly understood for two reasons. One, to understand the man centrality concept in the Mahatma two, to avoid a confusion between another kind of man centrality — Anthropomorphism which used to be a theory in semetic theology.

The man centrality in semetic theology gives importance to man as the most superior and special creation of God. That is why that “God created man in God’s own image.” Ludwig Feuerbach argues that the case is indeed opposite; since God is a concept which is the self esteem of man created God as an abstraction of all human qualities in man’s own image. However, the theory that man is a special creation of God was very convenient to human imagination. Further, the geocentric theory of Ptolemy gave a boost to
the unique nature of man by placing man at the central point in Universe, whose centre was earth. So earth is the centre of Universe; and man is the central creation, destined to be superior ruler of the universe itself. Indeed, a very comfortable thought. But then the heliocentric theory of Copernicus the--- geocentric theory of Ptolemy and man suddenly became a being on a planet which is just one among many, fortunately occupying a position so convenient that life can exist. Then came Charles Darwin with his theory of evolution that made man just another living organism like any other living organism. The chain was further followed by Freud, Marx etc. who crushed the self erected lofty image of man. After all, man is not central to anything.

But man centeredness in religion is another thing. God- centered religion gives primacy to God and his desires; man lives only at the mercy of God. Man a creation totally depends and exists at the mercy of the creator - the God, who can at any time withdraw his continuing support that could bring an end to any creation. In God centered religion, man has really no role at all.

On the contrary, the Hindu religion is man centered, not God centered. Man is powerful, he is not at the mercy of God. Man creates his own destiny, and is his own
master. The differences in man centeredness and God centeredness with religion becomes explicit and luminant when we draw comparisons between the Hindu concept of Moksha and the semetic concept of salvation.

**Human life a preparation for Moksha**

For the Mahatma, human life is a preparation for Moksha. For the semetic religion salvation is given by God, God's mercy is an essential ingredient to it. No amount of human effort can make salvation possible unless God wishes it and grants it. One conceive of the movements in case of salvation; the one vertical and the other horizontal. That is a movement from human side which is supported from the divine.

On the contrary, moksha in Hinduism is not given, but attained. Pure human effort alone is sufficient enough to place a man at transcendental level. Various margas or paths are prescribed for this. One may choose any, and the end result shall be moksha.

When the Mahatma says that human life in this world is a preparation for moksha, he is only repeating the traditional philosophy of the land. Moksha guarantees the end of the vicious circle of birth death rebirth and death.
Human life by definition is that of suffering. Moksha is the goal what man ought to be aspiring.

Once a man realises this and starts regulating his existence as a preparatory stage for the desideratum which is moksha his life becomes beautiful, moral, meaningful, purposeful and in a word, good.

Social transformation based on transformation of the individual

The Mahatma’s concept of social transformation is a “bottoms up” approach instead of a “top down” one. Once individuals are transformed the society automatically is transformed.

Prima-facie, this may be a very ambitious programme, but the Mahatma had already invented a powerful weapon to that end. He had evolved a human mode of life and method to revolving conflicts.

“Satyagraha... is a living dynamic principle and philosophy of life which is yet to evolve and unfold itself fully. It may be said to be the law of being of coming humanity... It has yet to replace fully and effectively the
operation of physical force and coercion in social evolution and social dynamics."^{26}

Through satyagraha, the Mahatma was providing all those qualities required to become an authentic individual. If one could become a real satyagrahi, then it can automatically be stated that he had become an archetype individual, a model human being.

The Mahatma is laying a great mile stone when he speaks about first internally transforming individuals and through such transformation transforming the entire society. What other social transformation can be greater and perfect than this? Such transformation has no coercion from without; even in the case of benevolent dictator, there shall be considerable amount of employment of force, power and coercion to bring the earning individuals to the path of righteousness the erring individual, so long as he does not realise that he is off the track would only consider that the benevolent dictator is yet another merciless tyrant.

The Mahatma had already laid down his theories towards transformation of individual citizens. First of all, just look at his faith in the intrinsic goodness of man! The Mahatma conceives of man as essentially good, essentially spiritual and essentially divine. If these three postulates are
accepted, a mere removal of those circumstances which makes man evil shall automatically make all human beings good just for the simple reason that is the very nature of man.

The Mahatma was a true Indian. All his thoughts, actions and speeches were in Indian context in the particular context of colonial rule and domination and whatever he thought spoke and acted was all for Indians. But then his philosophy become universal, it acquired importance for men all over the world. Certainly, the Mahatma did not plan any such universal appeal but when he found that his principles are transcending the boundaries of Statehood, language and continental limitations, probably he must have become happy and satisfied on one account: yes; after all, truth is truth, and truth really carries. His "experiments with truth" were finally showing signs of success much beyond his expectations.

"If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are indeed in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily-growing number of men and women of the West."27
The Mahatma lived his life at a very crucial point in time. Borrowing the expressions from Auguste Comte the human knowledge and progress had passed the phases of the theological and the metaphysical and was just entering the phase of the positive or the scientific.

Positivism of Auguste Comte wanted the extension of the methods of natural sciences to the studies of humanities and society. He aspired to create a social physics and scientific sociology. Positivism based itself on the philosophy of empiricism, a phenomenon that cannot be given in experience is spurious one. They wanted to do away with speculative philosophy and metaphysics; they wanted just the philosophy of science. Positive philosophy as they called, phenomena those could be observable and experiment.

Comte finds fault with the enlightened thinkers. He says that the philosophy of the enlightenment was essentially critical and they knew very well how to bring the old reign and old order down. But they did not know how to erect or construct a new order in place of what they very successfully brought down. It is in this sense that Comte calls the enlightenment philosophy a negative philosophy. The negative philosophy must be supplied with positive philosophy of positivism. Positivism has a
programme social phenomena scientifically. It can identify social laws and predict the course of social development. Therefore, through the knowledge of social sciences and the laws or principles functioning behind social phenomena, plausible and real social reforms could be scientifically planned and carried out. In this manner, a new order of society, positive order of society could be erected where science would be replacing religion. Comte says that science will be functionally analogous to Catholicism.

The Austrian thinkers Mach had closely followed the spirit of positivism. He had also borrowed heavily from the empiricism that had become a philosophy of scepticism with the English Philosopher David Hume. Around the time of Machismo Linguistic analytical philosophy developed through the Tractatus logico philosophicus of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein was giving the view that language depicts reality and linguistic analysis amply sufficient to yield all knowledge. After publishing Tractatus Wittgenstein himself had retired from philosophy on his firm conviction that he had solved out all problems in philosophy and there would be no more philosophy to be done. Philosophy ended. But then we find Wittgenstein realising his mistakes and himself rejecting his entire theory later, by exclaiming that instead of solving problems in philosophy he had only increased them.
In Vienna, in the department of Philosophy and Inductive Sciences of Vienna University, some thinkers like Shlick, Carnap, Neurath etc. formed a study group. They synthesised Machismo with the philosophy of early Wittgenstein and came out with a rigorous kind of positivism under the name of Logical Positivism. This group of thinkers came to be known as the “Vienna circle.” By the end of 1930s, the Vienna circle ceased to be, and Logical Positivism shifted to America, where it gave rise to Logical Empiricism.

The 19th century also saw both the rise and fall of Marxism. Towards the end of 19th century, much of the Marxian theories were proved wrong; and in spite of the Jewish communities desperate requirement, Marxism did not take roots in Germany. It failed in advanced Germany, but succeeded in backward Russia. (In course of time Marxism collapsed in Russia as well). But then the Frankfurt School came out with the critical theory of Marxism by the middle of 20th century, but their efforts were also obviously fruitless. Though the Frankfurt school tried to be active from America, Marxism could not be saved.
Jean Paul Sartre and existentialism came as another movement in philosophy but they had tremendous differences even among themselves. Since they were more individualistic these differences were bound to be existentialists, theistic, atheist, Marxists, anti-Marxists and so on.

Positivism, Logical Positivism, Marxism, Existentialism (of some kind), critical theory etc, preceded by French enlightenment all speak of just one thing, the Euphoria of science during that period. Religion, God, Spirituality, Metaphysics and the like, all of them were treated as useless, baseless and meaningless. Thinkers laid much importance on the superiority and omnipotence of science.

But then, this scientific Euphoria was much short lived. God, spirituality and religion were indeed making a formidable come back to human society, this time with epistemological footing. Man soon realised his shortcomings, drawbacks and incapacity.

It was during the Euphoria of Science that man had lost much of his human essence, morality and spirituality. But this indeed became instrumental in reforming and rectifying much problems with religion and many
malpractices within society which used to be based on ignorance, superstitions etc.

It was when the scientific euphoria started collapsing that the Mahatma was living. Naturally, the personality of the Mahatma was a tremendous source of moral strength to people the world over. It was when the violent world was morally crumbling that the Mahatma started addressing Indians. He was preparing Indians to morally fight the unethical rule of Britain on India. Though this was the Mahatma’s main occupation many of his teachings became universal.

His principles of “ahimsa” (non-violence) had really gone a long way to set a violent-free world reflecting his advocacy for peace and truth and was very much opposed to any form of war. He called war ‘an unmixed evil’ and ‘mass murder’ war can be no solution to any thing violence can only breed violence. He also stated - “an eye for an eye would only result in making the entire world blind.”

Indeed, the Mahatma appealed warring nations not to go for war. He asked them to wage war against common enemies of man such as poverty, disease, ignorance and the like. The Mahatma was slowly becoming a world personality. M.M. Ismail says:
"His life and work possess a meaning to the world... which at the present time is so much distracted by wars and threats of war. His political technique, which is essentially specific in conception, and his philosophy of political conduct, based on the triple maxim of Love, Truth, and Non-violence, furnish ample food for reflection to nations whose mutual relationships are at present regulated by diplomacy, hatred and war". 28

Hence, Gandhi through his philosophy of non-violence and the techniques of satyagraha opened the path to peaceful co-existence and world peace. "In the international field," writes J.B.Kripalani, Gandhi was the greatest advocate of world peace in modern times. The way of peace, according to him, is the way of truth and non-violence. Peace is one of the highest aspirations of mankind today. And no peace can come through war. Forced peace is no peace. Peace established with the help of the army and police is no peace at all, it conceals a smoldering fire of revolution. True peace, on the contrary, depends on pure justice based on the recognition of the innate dignity of man, and the law of love that binds man and man into an intimate brotherhood free from all selfishness, greed and exploitation, and consequently free from the need for arms and ammunition. The choice before mankind today is not
between war and non-violence but between non-violence and non-existence; continuation of the human race or its annihilation. Gandhi through his philosophy of non-violent revolution acquires a new relevance and urgency today, and comes to the aid of exasperated mankind frightened by impending doom, and thus, contributes to the continuation and consummation of human history. The quest for an alternative to war is now our common task in which Gandhi pioneered so significantly, writes Gene Sharp. In the opinion of Rev.J.C. Winslow, Satyagraha is the only key which can unlock the door of escape from the madhouse into the sunshine of sanity and peace, for a world increasingly conscious of impending catastrophe.

India is a nation that has a tradition of producing great sons and eminent personalities. With the development of the western world, the whites began to under rate the master minds of the subcontinent. In fact, there is no point in lamenting that the world does not give India its due, as we Indians ourselves do not give India her due. We ourselves are ignorant of our past: glory. We ourselves are running after the west in a senseless way. We ourselves are not giving the due to Indian philosophy and tradition we clamour great objections to any effort to Indianisation. Of course, we do not have any right to blame the west: we miserably fail in our duty to demonstrate ourselves to them.
The Mahatma is just one personality among the long line. The Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayana Menon rightly says, "only the land that had mothered a doctrine like Bhagavat Gita can give birth to such a son like the Mahatma."

This expression indeed is meaningful. The Mahatma made best use of his ancestry and heritage in shaping up his personality. Fortunately, his continuous interaction with the British, though it used to be very unpleasant to the purpose of them, made him known to the outside world. The world came to know Gandhi and they became bewildered. The world became bewildered when they happen to hear Swami Vivekananda too. Many of our other ancestors were not so lucky enough or we were not lucky enough that they were not known: or else as it is done today, the west would have studied them, and we would have followed what the west does. For the Mahatma, he had already become a world citizen, showing the world what Indians really means.

As already stated, the Mahatma did not offer any philosophy as such. His life was rather full of action that made people call him a Karmayogi. It is for the students of the Mahatma to construct a philosophy out of the Mahatma,
and considerable works are already been done on him. What we have as a result of this is Gandhism.

The relevance and significance of Gandhism is ever increasing in contemporary world. Western world had long lost the scientific explorer and materialistic world view, tenets of spiritualism is in the rise. But antagonism and enmity among nations are still existing and possibilities of war cannot be ruled out as yet from our world.

Such a situation calls for many ambassadors of peace in the world. Indeed there are many such ambassadors of peace at work the world over though we still need many more. Any such ambassador of peace automatically and instantly becomes at least a student of Gandhi, if not a Gandhian himself. The Mahatma shall ever continue as a perennial source of inspiration, theory and practice of peace, spirituality and humanism. One could easily say that the creativity of Gandhism had immortalised Mahatma Gandhi.

Thus, the transformation of common man to guide him to his destiny, spiritually, mentally and physically had been the task of the Mahatma. Every other theory that he envisaged was a means to this end. Once such transformation occurs within individuals all other sphere
related to man gets transformed itself automatically, in a most natural and spontaneous manner. One need not think about any other kind of transformation separately. Once man realises that transcendence is the destiny of man, it is only natural that such realisation makes man to do all kinds of internal and external changes both within and without man to facilitate transcendence. These changes transform man and human society which result in the long run in transformation of the world.