CHAPTER - III

GANDHI VIEWS ON THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION, MORALITY AND POLITICS
A. Modern trends in religion:

Gandhi represents one of the rare spirits who come to the world science only now and again, lead a dedicated life of exemplary courage, devotion and action, serve as the beacon light for his contemporaries and leave a luminous trail for the posterity to follow. This chapter seeks to analyze and explicate what Gandhi primarily stood for and what he basically aimed at demonstrating through his words and examples. Since Gandhi is generally viewed as a religious man, a person of the highest moral integrity and yet a highly effective politician, this chapter will try to uncover the guiding principles, presuppositions and basic conceptual foundation of his religious, moral and political thought without proper understanding of which the subtlety and potency of his views as well as the strength and weakness of his position can not be fully grasped either in theory or in practice.

On account of using the name of religion and advocating principles of truth and non-violence, the age-old principles upheld by saints, Gandhi came to be called a saint (Mahatma), and because of being actively involved in politics, he was variously characterised as an anarchist, a socialist, a reactionary, a revolutionary, a cosmopolitan and so on. Gandhi, of course, always disclaimed the
ue of Mahatma and he was, too non-typical of a politician to be branded by any of the usual forms of political labels. Whether he was or was not a saint or Mahatma, to assume him to be so will hinder rather than help the examination and evaluation of his thoughts. It would certainly be non-Gandhian to attach a scriptural status to his thoughts and utterances, and to try to follow them uncritically without being convinced of their validity.

Gandhi's religion was a religion of love. He identified non-violence as soul force within us. To the extent we realize non-violence we become god-like. He spoke of it as the cohesive force among animate beings. He insisted on our learning to use the force, effectively. It is infinite love and it involves capacity of suffering also. He added that the only way to find God is to see Him in his creation. This can be done by service of all. The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. This calls for renunciation. It is this that differentiates man from the beast. A true devotee consecrates himself to the service of humanity without any reservation. Self realization is impossible without service of and identification with the poorest. Service without humility was to him selfishness and egotism. This demands complete surrender.

Today the topic of religion assumes an increasingly important place in social sciences. Numerous research and studies have been undertaken by scholars of various disciplines. However as we said earlier, from the point of view of the disciplines in social sciences, religion is studied in terms of its function or role. We have followed
the tradition set up by Talcott Parsons. Gandhi in the approach to the problem of religion in this context. We shall now proceed to discuss the role of religion in human society.

As humanity moves from small isolated societies into the huge, complex urbanized ones, religion also changes along with other aspects of society. It is a factual comprehension to note that the concept of God as the highest reference is most of the traditional religions tends to be gradually withdrawn from the local scenes. With diverse religions and diverse classes embraced under one religion, the concept of God can no longer be thought of as attached in some peculiar way to the trees, hills, and rivers of a particular local or to customs and habits of a particular town. This refers to the God as the sacred. There is no gain saying the fact that many an urban dweller still believes in God, but what is implied here is the degree of attachment to naturalism which is becoming less in urbanized societies when compared with simple societies.

In modern complex societies, one witnesses the gradual diminution of anthropomorphism which is an interpretation of what is not human or personal in terms of human or personal characteristic. This means that the cruder conceptions of spirits and Gods as definite physical types living, eating and sleeping at some definite locations in the invisible realm and closely in contact with sacred objects tend to be replaced by more abstract and generalized conception.

In the preliterate single society, religion seems to permeate nearly every act, being inextricably bound up with technological,
economic and political behavior whereas in the complex urbanized society, traditional religion tends to be increasingly separated from everyday affairs. Thus, we see that in the modern city, religion is withdrawn and put into a category by itself. The time devoted, the preoccupation with the supernatural becomes limited. In this sense, it is possible that religious organization may devote itself to the promotion and maintenance of rituals devoid of doctrines and applications.”

Furthermore, we see that religious homogeneity tends to diminish in urban complex society. As we shall see more later, a complex civilization is a diverse one, characterized by high mobility and the interpretation of different groups and culture. In this situation, religious beliefs and practices jostle one another. Since the people must live together a modus vivendi or manner of living must be worked out, involving a certain amount of mutual tolerance in religious matters. Even the most doctrinaire religions such as Islam, develop sects which must live side by side”. Such tolerance is contrary to the absolutistic spirit of religion; insofar as it tends to weaken the complete acceptance of religious dogma, scepticism, atheism and apathy arise.

And finally, we may say that, in complex modernized society, the religious system tends to become fragmented. Some of the essentially religious sentiments and ceremonies become attached to the state, which has an organization separate from that of religion. The State is set for religion state conflicts. The state either uses
religion for its own ends or it relegates the religious organization to survive by its own device, as in the case of the secular state in which the government may undertake to foster public education, but no specific religious institutions are given the right to identify itself with the State." In the sense, the state is known as the secular State.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to say definitely that in complex society, traditional religion will lose all its traditional rule. Certain rules which other social institutions cannot take over will be retained by the traditional religion. The individual roles are the ones that will not be possibly taken away from it. The service in moral affairs and the satisfaction of emotional needs can be better performed by traditional religion than other worldly concepts and further matters of faith that are not subjects of knowledge will remain as functions of traditional religion."

As society constantly changes, religion also undergoes constant change. With reference to its contextual contents, it is likely that only rational and scientific aspects of religion will appeal to the urban and modern man. In this connection, superstitious aspects of religion will eventually give way to a more reasonable and more practicable aspects of it. Thus, it is possible that theistic religion will have modified some of its doctrinal concepts in order to suit the temperament of modern scientific thought. Along with this, religious organizations will have to be more practical, and they must be prepared to respond to the need of the people in an earnest way. The world today is in an urgent need of religious morality to check the problems that have been generally
accepted that social problems arise because the modern men seldom heed religious and moral precepts, and they are more fascinated by such concepts as materialism and socialism which seem to tangibly provide them with immediate satisfaction.

Traditional religion does not offer immediate satisfaction. But it offers the lasting solution to the problems concerning the individual and society in the long run. The reasons why the modern man carelessly turn their back to traditionally religious principles are numerous, but one of them is the obsolete method of presentation of the doctrine to the mass by the religious principles are numerous, but one of them is the obsolete method of presentation of the doctrine to the mass by the religious organizations today. If the religious bodies modernise themselves and keep abreast of the present tempo of social change, and try to modify religious doctrines and principles into a more national and practical ones which are acceptable to the minds of the modern men, then it can be expected that traditional religion could still function as a moral guidance to modern society. Therefore, what is required at present is the sincere effort on the part of religious leaders to come forward with a truly meaningful and effectively practical method by which an essence of religion could be conveyed to the people for practice. How to do this is left to the religious leaders to work out for themselves because the method of preaching is practically an art of the individual.
B. Transcendental Religion

Gandhi in his speeches and writings used much of what is said in the Hinduism. And he claimed time and again, to be religious person, particularly a Hindu. His political utterances were sprinkled with religious, mostly Hindu connotation. This may tempt one to have wrong understanding of what Gandhi meant by religion. In order to wipe out any such temptation, here are his own words.

"For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the services of my country and of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita, I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. So my patriotism is for me a stage on my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there are no policies devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul."\(^1\)

In other occasion, he explained what he meant by religion.

"It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly praise above all other religions, but the religion which transcends, Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the Truth within and which ever purifies"\(^2\)

His views are a challenge to the arrogance of power politicians some of whom claim infallibility for their views and actions. He said that "the religious ethics and piety: forgiveness, meekness, humility and universal tolerance should influence human action."\(^3\)

He was also very conscious of religion being misused in human life especially in the field of politics, and gave a term of reference. "I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in

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\(^1\) Young India, April 3, 1924, p.112.
\(^2\) Young India, 12-5-1920, p.2.
\(^3\) Varma V.P., Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p.73.
conflict with morality. "As soon as we lose moral basis we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful cruel and incontinent and claim to have God on his side."

From these unequivocal terms one can understand that Gandhi, although a religious person, did not give place to, mysticism and particularly rituals and superstitions. His religion was ethical and moral based. Ethics and moral characters, in his view, are best understood only through one's service to the humanity. He gave utmost priority to the welfare of the people who are the parts of the 'Whole'. The service to the parts, as a means to realize the 'Whole' became his religion. He said, 'to serve is my religion'. Politics was just a platform which he took in spite of many odds, only to perform this religion.

His religion, which remained transcendent from all other religions, was nothing but a package of ethics, morality and faith in the goodness of all. His traditional religion, Hinduism was taught to him from the cradle therefore was easier for him to adopt and follow closely. However he had no hesitation to condemn irreligious practices and rituals in Hinduism and the misuse of religious sentiments of the people.

We would like to infer from this study that although Gandhi was a religious person who supported 'religion in politics', never intent

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4 Young India, 21-7-1920, p.4.
5 Young India, 24-11-1921, p.385.
to exploit the sentiments of the people for his own or the party sake. On the contrary his ethical religion, he believed would spiritualize the politics and thereby makes it a medium for social peace. Here politics play a secondary role to religion (service to the humanity).

Although Gandhi's perception of religion was humane, it is very difficult to believe that everyone would take religion in the same sense. Because the word 'religion' is thoroughly ambiguous and susceptible to high degree 'misinterpretation.' And there would come a group of professional politicians whose prime object be 'power' and who show least concern for the welfare of the mass, to take advantage of this grant for mixing religion into politics without realizing the consequence of it, and will make a nasty mess of it as it has been done today. There would emerge another group to exploit this consent for their selfish interest. So it is perilous to say, 'we need religion in politics' without making it clear to the public what does it mean. Unless and until we have the accessibility to the entire mass and a charismatic communication, it is unwise to venture this risk. Instead, we may take up terms like 'ethics' (political ethics) 'morality (political morality) etc. and try to practice and propagate them.

C. Religiosity of Gandhi

Right from the beginning Gandhi, by nature, was a piously religious person. At home he was brought up religiously. Throughout his childhood he had been in an atmosphere charged with religiosity. The air which he lived in was saturated with the reverberation of verses from scriptures and teachings of saints and seers. The Jain
friends of his father and the people of other faiths who frequented his father gave Gandhi the essential teachings of religion which fixed in his mind and assimilated with the life. However, while the ethical part of religion stayed with him and grew as he did, the rituals did not appeal to him so much. He did not hesitate to question those customs and practices which failed to satisfy his mind (reason). Honesty, love, suffering for others, sensitiveness to human feelings, conscience, truthfulness were the young days religious lessons that remained with him until the end.

At this childhood and adolescence he had no occasion to read the scriptures. But he was full with the ethics of religion and when he read the scriptures first time in England the teachings of the religions went strait into his mind to stay.

As he was impressed by the ethical part of religion, the moral teachings of great teachers irrespective of the faith, appealed him. That was one of the reasons why Gandhi, while in England, was attracted by the Britishers, honesty, justice and human attitude despite the fact they were Christians.

This religiousness and ethics softened his heart and mould him into a fine human being. When he went to South Africa, he had to face for the first time, the harsh reality of human brutality and political vindictiveness and he himself was victimized more than once. Gandhi had exactly diagnosed the social patho and rightly prescribed the therapy. He found that the Indians there led politically mute life, and their unlettered ignorance and helplessness were best exploited
by those at the helm of affairs for their ethnic interest. They were closing all doors of human developments to Asians, particularly Indians, and they were denied even of the fair share of their labour. The sensitive mind of Gandhi could not tolerate such unjustifiable happenings which were simply inhuman. He was greatly moved by the plight of those helpless beings and decided to volunteer himself to fight against the injustice and to secure 'rights' for them. That was how Gandhi entered, rather was drawn into politics.

His choice of politics therefore, was not an accident, neither a choice of profession. Out of love for his brethren who underwent untold suffering at the hands of the White; out of his moral compulsion to fight for the rights and liberty of his slavish fellow Indians, he entered into politics. His consciousness over truthfulness, honesty, justice etc., made him visualize the plight of Indians as a blatant denial of freedom and rights, and the inner voice dictated him that it was his duty to encounter the challenge and stand against every odds for the welfare of those 'coolic' Indians. His love for fellow brethren, the moral compulsion to fight for rights, and his conscience were some of the elements of his ethical religion. Therefore it was religion which dragged him into politics.

However, for Gandhi both religion and politics did mean different. As Gandhi grew in religion his search for the inner meaning of the teachings of the religions too became intense. The faith in the Absolute was becoming deeper and deeper. At a stage he found that
'Truth' was that Absolute, and to realize the Truth and see it face to face became the very purpose of his life.

He was deeply convinced that as the goal, the Truth, was perfect, the means to reach the perfect goal ought to be perfect. He was sure that "if we take care of the means, the end will take care of itself." So he tried to perfect his religion.

One of the basic values of our religions impressed Gandhi even at his early age was 'Ahimsa'. And his contemplation on ahimsa revealed him that 'Ahimsa' was truly the 'paramodharma'. He experienced that ahimsa was more powerful than any other means. It also convinced the 'intellectual' Gandhi who was making scientific enquiry into every aspect of life. As he could realize that "ahimsa is the law of life" and "himsa-the death", and therefore, ahimsa only be the means to attain the Truth. Hence forth ahimsa became his religion.

Gandhi was of the opinion that this religion cannot be practiced in isolation. At least for two reasons, he thought, it ought to be practiced in the midst of human beings. The first reason is: the purpose of life and the objective of his religion is the realization of the Truth which is 'Perfect' and 'Whole'. It is all inclusive and encompassing and there is nothing beyond it or after it. Everything including we, the human beings, are the parts of it. And if the purpose of life is to see, face to face the Truth of the 'Whole' which is invisible and intangible, the only way open to us is to serve its parts which are very much visible and tangible. He said:
"To see the universal and all pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creations as oneself."6

This understanding prompted him to serve the human beings.

Second reason is: non-violence, as he understood, was not just abstinence from killing or injuring. It was more of positive in nature. It meant for him love, affection, sympathy, tolerance, patience, control one’s corporeal senses and emotions etc. "Man’s highest endeavour lies in trying to find God", he said, "he cannot be found in temples or places of worship built by man’s hands, nor can He be found by abstinences. God can be found only through love, not earthly but divine."7

Love as such does not have any sense in isolation. It gets meaning only if practiced. The practice of it requires fellow beings. The expression of love is meaningful only through voluntary service to others. The test of Ahimsa necessitates one to perform his role in the human family.

Thus, both the end, the Truth, and the means, non-violence, made it necessary for him to be very much part of the being and identify himself with the rest. And he found that the service of the creation of God is the only possible service that can be rendered to God. And, for Gandhi, human beings were the closest fellow beings to serve. So his religion has been 'to serve human family'.

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This service to humanity would not be a religion for him unless it is 'complete', he stated: "The whole gamut of human activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities." This motive with the highest purpose of attaining God through the service of his creation made him take active part in every walk of public life including politics. A 'complete' service requires one to cover every sphere of human life. Politics is an integral part of it.

D. Religion and Morality

Since times immemorial, sages and saints have been preaching and propagating non-violence (to use a negative term) or love (to put it in a positive form). But they largely kept it confined to the domain of religion and morality to be practised on individual levels. However, with tremendous developments in science and technology and with colossal weapons of mass destruction at the disposal of men, the question of violence and non-violence has become much more urgent and alarming today than ever before. The humanity virtually has reached the crossroad of self-annihilation and sheer survival, and one cannot afford to take this situation lightly.

In the recent past, Mahatma Gandhi took up this challenge and made it his life mission to bring home this conviction to his fellow men.

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8 Gandhi, M.K., Quoted by Varma, V.P. Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, pp.75-76.
all over the world that no salvation is possible for them, whether as individuals, communities or nations, unless they tread the path of truth and non-violence. He tried to use non-violence on a collective scale to fight violence, injustice and exploitation with a considerable success. Hence an examination of his views might shed some light on the validity, use and efficacy of non-violence.

Diagnosing the sickness of our civilization, Gandhi pointed out that it was rooted in the immorality of our religions and the soullessness of our politics. He, therefore, seeks to infuse moral and spiritual values applicable to one and all so as to transform human relationship and the very nature of our civilization.

The uniqueness of his approach lies in the fact that he distilled the essence from the untapped moral and spiritual reservoirs of humankind and used it to form the basic foundation and common core of his moral, religious and political thought. This led him to redefine the nature and role of religion, politics and the power behind politics, as well as the challenge the conventional dichotomies between private and public morality, religious and political pursuits, sacred and secular actions, moral rightness and politics expediency, personal salvation and universal liberation.

The basic religious assumption of Gandhi was his belief in God. Through his inquisitive and assimilative mind, he tried to learn and grasp the notion of God from different sources which enriched his Hindu faith imbibed from the childhood. Thus, he developed a broadened view of religion. As he says: "by religion I do not mean
formal religion or customary religion but that religion which underlies all religions..." Although he called himself a Hindu, his Hinduism included the best in all other religions. In his own words, "I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind...." This universalistic religion is the key to the life and philosophy of Gandhi. The essential ingredients of his religion are truth and non-violence. Truth is God and non-violence is the means of realizing Him. If Truth or God is the highest reality, non-violence as the means to God-realization is the highest virtue. Gandhi finds confirmation of his view in the Sanskrit saying: "Non-violence is the highest virtue" (ahimsa parama dharmah).

Why should non-violence be regarded as the highest virtue or the only means to realize Truth? Because Truth or God pervades all beings and sustains them through love. Hence God can be realized by love and to love God is to love the beings in whom He dwells. Thus Gandhi observes: "When you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is Love, i.e. non-violence." Besides, it can be easily seen that non-violence or non-injury to life is the logical presupposition of all other duties towards a being can be performed unless we let that being live and refrain from hurting him. Hence love and compassion to all beings and refraining from violence and injury to them is the basic source of all other virtues.

11 Young India, December 31, 1931.
It must be borne in mind that the apparently negative Indian term, *ahimsa* (non-violence) is not merely negative in its import. Just as some other important Indian terms, such as *Nirvana* of the Buddha and *Nirguna Brahman* (absolute) of Sankara have profound meanings and cannot be said to have only a negative purport, so also ahimsa is to be understood both in its negative and positive senses. Gandhi clearly says: "Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness, but it is positive state of love, of doing good to the evil-doer."¹²

In keeping with his idea of inseparability between means and end, Gandhi considers non-violence inseparable from Truth or God. He says: "*Ahimsa* and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like two sides of a coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which is the reverse? Nevertheless, *ahimsa* is the means; Truth the end."¹³

Following the well-known commandment of his favourite, *Gita*, "To action alone hast thou a right" (*karmany eva'dhikaraste II. 47*), Gandhi lays emphasis on sticking to non-violent action as one's supreme duty and exhorts people to take to their hearts that victory is assured to him who is a practitioner of non-violence. As he puts it: "Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to

¹² Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.35.
reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point, final victory is beyond question."\textsuperscript{14}

It is, thus, obvious that according to Gandhi religion is rooted in morality, and the essence of morality lies in love or non-violence. To lead a religious life, therefore, is to lead a moral life. As Gandhi says: "True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other."\textsuperscript{15} The ultimate aim of religion is God realization and God can be realized by means of love and service. Since God pervades all human beings, the best way to find God is to love and serve the humanity. Gandhi was thus irresistibly drawn to politics to serve a vast multitude of humanity suffering under political slavery and economic exploitation, and the only way suited to serve humanity was to use the means of non-violence. As he explicitly states: "I approach politics as everything else in a religious spirit. Truth is my religion and ahimsa is the only way of its realization. I have rejected once and for all the doctrine of the sword."\textsuperscript{16} As a true votary of non-violence, Gandhi was ever ready to face any amount of torture and tyranny, to make any kind of sacrifice and even lay down his life without any ill-will or a sense of retaliation. He says: "He who meets death without striking a blow fulfills his duty cent percent."\textsuperscript{17} As a practitioner of non-violence, Gandhi had only love to offer to his opponent, and this was the way how he used to win over and befriend his opponents and adversaries. As he says: "Having flung aside the sword, there is

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.40.
\textsuperscript{15} Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.255.
\textsuperscript{16} Harijan, July 13, 1936.
\textsuperscript{17} Harijan, July 13, 1940.
nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me. It is by offering that cup that I expect to draw them close to me."^{18}

Gandhi is in complete agreement with sages and saints in holding the view that the basic purpose of human life or of any true religion is God-realization or seeing God face to face. But he strongly feels that this purpose can be fulfilled by serving our fellow beings and not by deflecting from our responsibilities towards them. Politics is, thus, embedded in his very concept of religion. As he says: "I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end."^{19} Gandhi once remarked that if he could persuade himself that he would find God in a Himalayan cave, he would proceed there immediately. But he felt that God cannot be found in any way other than by serving humanity. His views in this respect are somewhat different from those of Buddha and Mahavira, the founders of two great Indian religions, as also from those of Vivekananda and Aurobindo, the two of his illustrious contemporaries who renounced the household life in the quest of their spiritual goal. Even though Aurobindo was once an active nationalist, he decided to keep politics away from spiritual pursuit and led a life of seclusion. Buddha explicitly states: "It is not easy to lead this holy life in all its perfection and purity like a polished conch-shell by a person living the

^{18} Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.452.

^{19} Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.192.
household life." It is, of course, true that they were all extremely kind and compassionate; and they all tried to work for the good and welfare of miserable beings in their own ways after attaining enlightenment or salvation. Their general attitude is that he who is himself unenlightened cannot effectively help others attain enlightenment, and hence cannot truly serve the humanity. But, according to Gandhi, we are not required to renounce the world either before or after self-realization. Gandhi's views, in this regard, are more in consonance with those of the Gita which shows distinct preference for the life of an active householder.21

Gandhi's strict adherence to moral principles both in personal and public life and his insistence on their universal applicability make even some of his sympathizers wonder if his views are somewhat unrealistic, and whether he is underrating the temptations of the flesh and ignoring the corrupting tendencies of power politics so rampant in our present society. Ramana Maharshi, for example, thought that "Gandhi was a good man who sacrificed his spiritual development by taking on too great, too Atlas-like, a burden upon himself."22 Mystics generally believe that it is impossible to bring about the kingdom of God on earth whereas Gandhi favoured the Tolstoyan socialist belief that this ideal is attainable on earth. Hence he felt a strong urge to work relentlessly towards the realization of this goal. It is interesting to see how both Gandhi and Aurobindo, despite their different modes

20 Digha Nikaya, 1.63; Majjhima Nikaya 1.179,240, & 267.
21 Gita III 4.7, 19-26; V.2; VI. 1 & 3.
of working for the uplift of the world, were deeply dedicated to the mission of bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth which Gandhi conceived in the form of what he called 'Rama Rajya', an ideal polity or utopian society based on the principles of truth and non-violence, whereas Aurobindo envisaged it in the form of the emergence of supramental Gnostic beings, attainable through concerted and intense practice of integral yoga. In any case, whether this ideal state or perfection is fully attainable or not, to make one's best efforts to come closest to it still remains a valid and laudable pursuit. Gandhi's untiring struggle to integrate and harmonize seemingly opposed ideals of terrestrial and celestial good and his relentless effort to make human welfare flow into divine fulfillment cannot but be viewed with enormous admiration and fascination.

It is due to this integral approach that Gandhi does not look upon politics as a game of deception, exploitation, coercion and suppression which tend to foment quarrels, divisions and fights. Instead, he regards it as an art of doing what is morally right and a way of serving humanity on a mass scale. S. Radhakrishnan makes a distinction between politics as a profession and politics as a vocation. If politics is taken in the former sense, then "the politician is one trained to transact public business in an efficient manner"; but if it is taken in the latter sense, then "the politician is one who is conscious of a mission to save his people and inspire them with faith in God and
love of humanity."\(^{23}\) Gandhi takes politics in this latter sense. He, therefore, rejects the dichotomy between religion and politics. He feels that much damage has been done to humanity throughout the world by separating religion from politics. Ordinarily, people think that religion is a matter of private concern whereas politics is concerned with public affairs. But Gandhi thinks that this divorce between private and public conduct is groundless. Morality epitomized in the dual principles of truth and non-violence is the common core of both religion and politics. If moral integrity is required of an individual in his personal conduct, it should equally be required of him in his public or political conduct. Politics is as essential as religion for the good and welfare of humanity. If adherence to moral law is good for religion, it is equally good for politics. Gandhi observes: "Non-violence is the Law of the human race and it is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force."\(^{24}\) He, therefore, adds: "It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the Law is good enough for the individuals, it is not for masses of mankind."\(^{25}\) He asserts that politics divorced from morality or religion is like a corpse which soon begins to stink. Thus Gandhi tries to revolutionize politics by ethics. He seeks to spiritualize political life, political institutions and change the whole attitude to both religion and politics by making truth and non-violence as the


basic foundation of the two. People tend to have different attitudes to religion and politics. They say in religion, we are all sinners, but in politics everyone else is a sinner. Gandhi tried to redefine and broaden the notions of both religion and politics and bring them into harmony. According to him, those who say that religion and politics have nothing to do with each other, do not know what religion and politics really mean.

Gandhi, like Plato and Aristotle, recognized the necessity of power to coordinate and direct human activities for the good and welfare of humanity. He also agreed with Hobbes and Machiavelli in holding the view that the pursuit of power is embedded in human nature, but he draws attention to the fact that the pursuit of power, in the absence of moral values, tends to corrupt political institutions, and the greater the concentration of power, the greater the propensity for corruption. Therefore, Gandhi was opposed to excessive centralization of power in the state. As he says: "I look upon an increase in the power of state with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress."26 "The individual is the one supreme consideration"27 for Gandhi. Individual alone is the moral agent and his moral authority is logically prior to the authority of any state. Power resides in the people, not in legislative assembly, executive

26 Modern Review, October 1935.
27 Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.95.
branch and judiciary. A government comes in office only to serve the people, and as Gandhi observes, "A Government is an instrument of service only in so far as it is based upon the will and consent of the people. It is an instrument of oppression where it enforces submission at the point of the bayonet." Therefore, according to Gandhi, "Cooperation with a just government is a duty; non-cooperation with an unjust government is equally a duty," "loyalty to a state, so corrupt is a sin, disloyalty a virtue." But Gandhi insists that the non-cooperation must be non-violent. It should be neither punitive nor vindictive, neither based on malice nor hatred. Then it will certainly bring the government to a stand still. Thus, while recognising with other political thinkers the need for the legitimacy of power, Gandhi underscores the point that the moral power or the soul-force is far superior to material power or brute force in terms of either individual effectiveness or collective survival.

Gandhi's full reliance on moral power both in personal and public life and his strict observance of non-violence, fasting, etc. made B.G. Tilak think that Gandhi was a Jaina by religion. Tilak was, therefore, greatly surprised when he told that Gandhi was a devout Vaishnav. He remarked:

"It is strange that up to now I did not know Gandhi's religion. People will laugh at my ignorance about such a great man. I was under the impression that Gandhi was a Jain, because all his opinions and teachings favour of the Jain religion- Non-violence, Satyagraha, fasting etc."

38 Young India, October, 1919.
39 Young India, August, 1920.
All these are more in keeping with Jain teachings than the Hindu religion. But these means are of no use in politics, which is required to change its attitude from time to time. Exalted religious principles or abstract doctrines about truth are not of much value in the present political game. I don't think that Satyagraha and fasting will have the least effect upon the mind of our rulers who are adepts in political warfare. We must use against them the same means as they use against us and as their tactics change, so must ours.\(^\text{31}\)

This remark clearly indicates the difference between the attitudes of Tilak and Gandhi.

i. Soul, force and Brute force:

Gandhi certainly drew inspiration and guidance from the soul-force and he was confident of its immensely superiority over brute force. He, however, humbly submits: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could."\(^\text{32}\) Thus Gandhi tested the ancient but largely ignored weapon of non-violence in the furnace of life and discovered that it could work wonders. The marvel is that its power works with meekness and humility. Referring to Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru once remarked: "This little man of poor physique had something of steel in him, something rocklike...There was a royalty and kingliness in him which compelled a willing obeisance from others."\(^\text{33}\) Gandhi possessed no material assets, held no government office and had no legislative, executive or judiciary power. He was neither a diplomat, nor an academic philosopher, nor


\(^{32}\) Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.39.

\(^{33}\) Nehru, Autobiography, p.129.
a creative artist, nor even a saint in the traditional sense, and yet his power shook a great empire. It was certainly his moral power of truth and non-violence or love. In his own words, "Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable."34

II. Human nature and non-violence:

Gandhi reinforces the validity and universal applicability of non-violence also on the consideration of human nature. As indicated earlier, he points out that non-violence is the law of human beings. We are different from animals only in so far as we, unlike them, refrain from using brute force or violence. Non-violence is the cultivation and preservation of human nature, whereas violence is the degradation and perversion of this nature. Human nature is potentially and essentially good because Divinity dwells within humanity. There is an essential unity and inter relation among all human beings on account of their coming from the same source, "the rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source."35 A human being is capable of attaining God and realizing his kinship with the whole creation, especially with the human race. Gandhi firmly believes that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent,36 and that "no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption."37

34 Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.453.
35 Young India, September, 1924.
36 Young India, December, 1924.
37 Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.150.
Gandhi tries to appeal to one’s heart, i.e. one’s inner sense of goodness rather than to mere reason. This is because he is fully convinced that a human being is essentially moral or righteous. Unlike most of western philosophers who, following Aristotle, regard rationality as the distinguishing mark of man, Gandhi, imbibing the general spirit of Indian tradition, feels that it is the moral goodness or righteousness (dharma) which constitutes the differentia of man. As has been said:

“Men and beasts are alike in matters of eating, sleeping, fearing, and sexual activities. Dharma alone is the additional prerogative of men, and those who are devoid of dharma are like beasts.”

This shows that what is most vital to human life is not his rational but his moral and spiritual nature. That is why Gandhi lays great emphasis on the intrinsic goodness of man which he calls soul-force as distinct from the brute force. The former, according to him, is vastly superior to and more effective than the latter.

It is through the exercise of this moral force or the power of righteousness (dharma) that he wishes to regulate the individual, social and moral life and fulfil the cherished objective of human life. This approach of Gandhi is very much similar to that of Bhismā, the great hero of the Mahabharata, who, in one of the concluding verses of this great epic, fervently appeals:

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38 Ahra nidra bhaya maithunanca
samanam etat pasubhir naranam
dharmohitesam adhiko viseso
dharmena ninah pasubhih samanah—“Hitopadesa”
"With uplifted hand I proclaim and no one pays heed to me. Even wealth and enjoyment are to be procured by means of righteousness. Why not uphold that righteousness?"\textsuperscript{39}

Moral goodness being embedded in human nature, Gandhi is full of hope that truth would ultimately triumph over falsehood, non-violence would overcome violence and good wills eventually prevail over evil.

Gandhi, indeed, is a great optimist. As he says: I am an irrepressible optimist... My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence.\textsuperscript{40} He adds: "Men like me cling to their faith in human nature... all appearances to the contrary not withstanding."\textsuperscript{41} Noting the fact that even animals respond to love, he is confident that non-violence or love would be much more effective on human beings. He asserts: "Man's nature is not essentially evil; brute nature has been known to yield to the influence of love. You must never despair of human nature."\textsuperscript{42} Gandhi had such an unshakable faith in the power of non-violence that he declares his pledge in the following words: "My marriage to non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position."\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{39} Urdhvanur viranmy esah na ca kascicchmoti mam. Dharmad at has ca karma ca so dharman kim no sevgate.
\textsuperscript{40} Mahatma, Vol.5, p.17.
\textsuperscript{41} Young India, February, 1927.
\textsuperscript{42} Harijan, November, 1938.
\textsuperscript{43} Bose, N.K., Selection from Gandhi, Navajivan, 1948, p.428.
Despite his optimism, Gandhi not unaware of the difficulties in the practical application of non-violence in the present socio-political life. He, therefore, emphasizes that a non-violent fighter must be properly trained in the art of dying with courage, dignity and honour having no feeling or retaliation whatsoever just as a conventional soldier is trained to kill his enemies without compunction. Non-violent fighter has to be fully self-controlled, fearless and selfless, and he should have the ability and willingness to endure any amount of suffering with equanimity. He can then accomplish what cannot be accomplished either by a massive coercive means or by a forceful appeal to reason. Indicating the superiority of non-violent suffering to rational appeal Gandhi says: "I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are strong...Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding."44 Gandhi sincerely believes that non-violent fighter can exert much greater influence on the world than a million violent men, because what really counts is the moral purity of men rather than their sheet number. He says "Self-sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man."45

Some one asked him to question: "To what extent will you carry out your policy (of non-violence) after freedom is gained?" Gandhi

45 Young India, March 19, 1925.
replied: "I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of new world order.

Thus, we see that Gandhi upholds the validity and universal applicability of the ancient teaching of saints or holy men that violence can be truly vanquished only by non-violence, anger can be overcome only by love. But the power of non-violence or love is too subtle and intangible to be easily visible by the blurred and cloudy eyes of the people engrossed in emotions and passions of greed, anger and pride. They are looking for a quick fix of all problems. Gandhi, referring to non-violence as the self-purifying spiritual weapon, says: "The spiritual weapon of self-purification, intangible as it seems, is the most potent means of revolutionizing ones environment and loosening external shackles. It works subtly and invisibly; it is an intense process though it might often seem a weary and long-drawn process, it is the straightest way to liberation, the surest and the quickest and no effort can be too great for it. What it requires is faith—an unshakable mountain-like faith that flinches from nothing."47

Thus, what we need to do in this violent world is to make concerted effort to facilitate the emergence of such individuals and groups who are fully convinced of the power of love or non-violence and who are able and eager to undertake the mission of drawing up and implementing a broad design of renovating the society and state

on the basis of moral and spiritual values. Politics certainly is dangerous and easily corruptible, but it is not beyond redemption and it can serve a great purpose, if its corrupting nature is duly diagnosed and continually countered through an effective process of moral and spiritual purification. Only those should join politics and should be supported to do so who are able and willing to take politics as a vocation and not merely as a profession. Only then can a truly new world order which we, as a human race, have a right to expect and achieve, be brought about. If one says, this ideal is too difficult and demanding to achieve, Gandhi would say, nothing worthwhile is achieved without paying the appropriate price and standing equal to the task.

Even if it is admitted that Gandhi's programme of social and political reconstruction (sarvodaya) and his revolutionary approach to political action and social change (satyagraha) are unattainable or hard to practice, it cannot be denied that they are based upon age-old universal moral principles whose validity and universal applicability were demonstrated by Gandhi in his personal, social and political life. From this it is not unreasonable to conclude that the Gandhian thought holds considerable promise for the solution of our present-day problems, and many of his ideas can be profitably utilized for the betterment of our religious, social and political institutions as well as for the fulfillment of our life as a whole.
E. Religion and Politics

The history of Indian subcontinent from time immemorial, says that politics has gone hand in hand with religion. Our ancestors without exception, gave great importance to religion in politics. It was so much so that some times it seems difficult to distinguish where did religion end and the other begin. Rulers in ancient times were vested with abounding power and religion was the only rein which controlled and directed them on the path of justice and honesty or in our own words 'Dharma'. In tune with that tradition, Gandhi too was an ardent supporter and practitioner of religion in politics, however with a difference.

1. The role of religion in Gandhian politics

Religion is a universal phenomenon found in all human societies and communities. It is defined as a belief in an unseen and mysterious power which has control over the living and non-living and all that exists and man owes his obedience and reverence to it. Religions have traditionally been associated with the supernatural and dogmatic beliefs in the human societies.

Although Mahatma Gandhi is not an academician and does not make systematic presentation in his writings, his contribution to raise the politics to the human level imbued with religious values is noteworthy. His life is conceived as a series of experiments with truth. He is not theoretical in formulating methodological concepts but as a man of action, he is aware of the changing circumstances and ever changing practices.
Mahatma Gandhi brought down religion from the cloistered seclusion of yogic contemplation to man's socio-political life of clash and conflict. On the other hand he sought to lift political struggle to the plane of moral and spiritual endeavour.48

Gandhi made it a mission of his life to revolutionize politics. It was under the profound influence of Gopalakrishna Gokhale, an economist, parliamentarian and statesman that Gandhi learnt to spiritualise politics. Gandhi proclaimed Gokhale as his political guru. Gokhale gave to India the mantra 'Politics must be spiritualized' and brought politics and religion together.

"Gokhale taught me" say Gandhi, "that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country should be not to glorify in language but to spiritualize the political life of the country and the political institutions of the country. He inspired my life and is still inspiring and in that I wish to purify myself and spiritualize myself. I have dedicated myself to that ideal."49

Gandhi wanted that the values of religion should be within the reach of human experience. He examined and found the consequences and results through his empirical testing of religion. He considered all the practical aspects and their consequences of the religion and rejected those which did not contribute to the progress of morality and human welfare like untouchability.

Gandhi pointed out:

In judging the actions of men we should always apply the test, whether it conduces to the welfare of the world or not.50

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48 Devvaraja, N.K., Philosophy, Religious and Culture.
50 Gandhi, M.K., Ethical Religion, p.63.
He held that religion which does not take account of practical affairs and does not solve to help them is no religion.51

Unlike other followers of religion who believe religion to be other worldly, Gandhi broadened the religious outlook by the inclusion of socio-economic and political spheres. According to him religion plays a dominant role in shaping the society and the state. His concern is more about the practical aspects of religion, rather than the transcendental and eschatological aspects of it.

Gandhi considers the human life as an integral which cannot be divided into water-tight compartments—social, economic, political and religious. In his viewpoint all act and react upon one another.52 Religion pervades the entire texture of human life. He believes on the other hand that spiritual law expresses itself through the ordinary activities of human life.53

Politics has generally been regarded as an aspect of human life where the moral values do not apply. In most of the political dealings, either rulers with the ruled or the subjects with the rulers or one country with another with tact and success have taken the foremost place. Secrecy, deception, cunning, exploitation, differences, division by rule and the like are found to be common in politics if they wish to succeed.54 Pitirim A. Sorokin Observes Throughout history, the moral integrity of powerful governments has been and still is too low and their criminality too great to entrust to them the life and well-being of

51 Young India, 7-3-1925, p.164.
52 Young India, 2-3-1922, p.13.
53 Young India, 3-9-1925, p.304.
mankind... a constructive realization of human aspiration demands a replacement of these governments of politicians by governments of scientists, saints and sages.55

Many social scientists and philosophers felt the need to have saintly men in public life. The political power can be exercised for the purpose of the good and the bad. All great leaders of men have considered the political power as an instrument of public service and to inculcate the spirit of service and promote moral values, religion has got to play a vital role.

Gandhi says that the politician in him has never dominated a single decision of his. He took part in politics as it encircles like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out despite one's attempts. On the other hand he says that he experimented to live in peace by introducing religion into politics.56 He did not isolate politics from the deepest things of his life as his politics are not corrupt and are inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth.57 His politics are derived from religion.

Gandhi was compelled to come into political field because he found that he could not do even social work without touching politics. He was of the opinion that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress.58

56 Young India, 12-5-1920, p.2.
57 Young India, 1-10-1931, p.28.
58 Harijan, 6-10-1946, p.341.
"For me" says Gandhi, "Politics bereft of religion is absolute dirt ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined... therefore in politics also we have to establish the kingdom of Heaven.\textsuperscript{59}

By the religious basis of politics, Gandhi would mean the supremacy of the concept of the moral right of conscience in the place of the divine right or ruler, Princes and other ascendant groups....\textsuperscript{60} The basic view of Gandhi is that the religious ethics of pity, forgiveness, meekness, humility and universal tolerance should influence human action.\textsuperscript{61}

Gandhi does not aim to exalt the existing political structures and powers as being ordained but aims to raise them to higher moral planes and thus to correct social and political inadequacies. Thereby he stands for the purification of even the structure of politics. It is clear that by emphasizing the religious basis of individual, social and political action,\textsuperscript{62} he upheld the actions against injustice on the moral and religious grounds.

Politics as enunciated by Gandhi which has religious bases is marked by the stress on moral value to set his politics on right action. Thereby he aims to set apart politics from the evils such as corruption, injustice, expediency and Machiavellian policies. The Machiavellian type of Government is altogether different from that of

\textsuperscript{59} Young India, 18-6-1925, p.214.
\textsuperscript{60} Varma, V.P., The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p.72.
\textsuperscript{61} Varma, V.P., The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p.73.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
Gandhi which separated the political expedience form morality. Machiavellian sanctioned the use of immoral means by rulers to gain their ends and offered an extreme example of a double standard of morals, i.e. one for the ruler and another for the private citizens. For Gandhi the means must be as moral as the end: He says that end cannot justify the means.63 As aptly pointed out by Gopinath Dhawan that the opposite theory that end justifies the means that are dangerous in practice and ethically unsound also can be applied, but this principle gives recourse to violence, untruth and all other evils.64

In Gandhian political though, loyalty to the supreme moral law of God takes precedence over loyalty to any unjustified system. on the other hand Gandhi wanted to strengthen the religious basic of politics (in the moral sense of the term). He did not consider that any particular religion, group or sect should be given preference over other65. This tendency avoids religious fundamentalism and promotes religious tolerance on the other hand.

Gandhi stood for imparting the teachings of the fundamental moral norms and ideals common to all religions in educational establishments under the control of the State Governments and opposed the inculcation of any religious teachings which are denominational and sectrarian in nature in the State institutions.

63 Gandhi, M.K., Ethical Religion, p.42
64 Gopinath Dhavan, The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, p.35.
65 Varma, V.P. The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya, p.42.
'Indeed religion' says Gandhi, "should pervade everyone of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral Government of the universe" 65.

Many countries are progressively becoming multiracial and multireligious. We have few countries wherein only a single religion flourishes. Hence we have to develop an attitude of hospitality to all other ways of professing religion and this has been taught by the great seers of all religions.

What we need today is not a religion which promotes separatism and fundamentalism or a religion which results in bloodshed but a religion which contributes to the national integration and progress and mutual cooperation and peace and upholds moral values and keeps politics at the service of mankind.

ii. Spiritualize politics not politicize Religion

Religion-politics bill was presented in the Lok Sabha. After a long discussion, it could not be passed and turned into a futile-bid. The matter attracted the academic and political world. Many columns in various newspapers and magazines discussed its pros and cons, and its effect on social, political and religious environment of the nation.

The questions, come to our mind, whether politics and religion are two separate things in man's life? Are they interdependent? Can one exist without the help of the other? Should politics be guided by religion? Etc....etc.

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65 Harijan, 10-2-1940, p.445.
Political thinkers have deeply studied the nature of politics. Aristotle said, "When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life". Good life means the growth of all human capacities.

In Indian thought, politics stands for system. It is not the nature of politics which is important but ideals, which are given more importance. Politics intends to bring about all-round development masses. The ruler is directly responsible to the people. For this purpose, he is provided with some rights, to perform lawful duties. While exercising his rights, he must not become a despot. On the other hand, Machiavelli stated, that, a ruler should concentrate himself and think only for organization, power-accumulation, attack, strategy and stability of the state.

As a result of industrial Revolution, life has become materialistic. In the twentieth century, politics has been defined as "the study of power", "policy of earn power" and like that. The means to earn power is given lesser importance. Value judgments have been ignored to build a powerful state. The example of Hitler and Mussolini are before us. Karl Marx said, "Religion is the opium of the poor." But the point to ponder is that what has happened to them? The disintegration of Russian empire is before us. It shows that whenever

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politics and religion are divorced, the outcome was anarchy, chaos and crisis.

Religion for Gandhi means both Truth and Non-violence. He himself said, "In order therefore to protect myself against any misunderstanding, I have said truth and non-violence is my creed." Religion expresses itself with the help of truth and non-violence. Non-violence is the means of discovery of truth which is called religion. Thus Gandhi's religion is pure truth and nothing else. He further said, "When you want to find truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, that is, non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and ends are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love." Gandhi tried to spiritualize man's life through the service of man. According to him, service of humankind is the service of God and that is, his religion. He once, said "To serve is my religion." He wanted to create an ideal society a Sarvodaya Samaj and for this purpose he wished to spiritualize the society. In this way, Gandhi's concept of religion is very wide, tolerant and comprehensive.

Before Gandhi's advent on the political scene, religion (ethical religion) and politics were divorced from each other. He made a Herculean effort to unite them into holy wedlock by spiritualizing politics. Gandhi introduced principle of non-violence into statecraft and practiced Satyagraha for the liberation of his country. Gandhi said during an interview, soon after served imprisonment in Yervada

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68 Gandhi, M.K., Hindu Dharma, p.4.
69 Gandhi, M.K., All we are Brothers, p.95.
Jail in 1922-24, "I have plunged into politics simply in search of truth....I want to show how to epitomize Mahabharata." Even though Gandhi was bitterly opposed to several aspects of modern politics, he did not despair of them. He felt that the world could be perfected if men become determined to live according to moral values. Through Satyagraha he showed the world that non-violence could be practiced in all spheres of life, including politics.

We witness today that political parties have corrupt the political environment of the country for their vested interests. Political equations are constructed for successes on political front and of course through immoral means. Ethical values are absent in today's politics. This has brought malice in the social relationships. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia commented that "True religion and true politics are synonyms". Talk of politics should always be in the context of specific moral values- truth, non-violence, brotherhood, simplicity, etc. For him also, religion is complementary to politics and vice-versa. He opined that "Religion is long term politics and politics is short-term religion". Thus, there is a need to understand the basic nature of politics and religion. Irrational bond of politics and religion will corrupt both of them. Politics devoid of ethical values should not be accepted. If this happens, it will create confusion.

It is being felt today that religious sentiments of the people are flared up for political purposes. The forible occupation of Hazrat Bal shrine is an immoral and unreligious act committed by some misguided youth. The wrong action was highlighted as if to protect
religious sanctity of the shrine, but truly, it was the work of fanatics who just wanted to destabilize the country. Again the technique of non-violence proved its strength and they had to surrender themselves with arms.

The other instance of fanaticism was the fatwa issued against Rushdie and Tashlima Nasreen. It does not intend to protect religion, but to deprive the right of freedom of expression.

These two illustrations show that it is not religion but fanaticism which governs politics. For, Gandhi, it is not true religion. Solution to such problems can be obtained in and through true religion and not through rituals, bigotry and dogmas. Thus, there is a need of value-based politics and disregard for use of religion for narrow and vested political ends. The need is to delink corruption from politics and not religion.

To convert bill into a law will not serve our purpose. The need of the hour is not to check and change the attitude of taking political benefit sin the name of religion. To materialize it, legal provision becomes ineffective. Democracy could only provide us an answer.

From the above discussion, we reach to the conclusion that Gandhi always stood for spiritualization of politics and not for politicization of religion. If politics is spiritualized, heaven may come on this earth, conversely if religion is politicized, heaven may turn into a hell. Let us make this earth heaven not a hell.