CHAPTER V

THE BUDDHA AND THE MAHATMA

Many great Indians had gone to great extend as influence in the making of the Mahatma. Undoubtedly the influence of Goutama Buddha is perhaps the deepest. The concept of Ahimsa is essential to Buddhism more than any principles of the Buddha, and this idea of Ahimsa had made the deepest and lasting influence in every spheres of Indian tradition subsequently.

Ahimsa is a leading tenet of Buddha philosophy. The Buddhist doctrine of non vidence is more practicable and it steers clear of extremes. The path of the Buddha has accordingly been called the middle way. ¹ “It occurs twice in the eight fold path first under right aspiration and again under right conduct. It is the first among the ten percepts for the order (Sangha) and also of the five rules of conduct for lay man ²

The idea of Ahimsa is perhaps the most powerful link between Buddha and the Mahatma. However the idea of Ahimsa is one such concept which has not only a universal appeal but also a universal origin. Perhaps all traditions in the world cherished a concept of Ahimsa in one or the other form, throughout the history of man.

The word Ahimsa (Non violence) is generally understood to mean non injury. It is an important concept in Indian as well as Western tradition. Ahimsa in both these traditions, is generally
understood, preached and practised as an ethico-religious virtue. However the role and place of Ahimsa in Indian tradition is relatively much clearer than in western tradition. It brings out the fact that, although Ahimsa has been emphasised by Gandhi, yet it is not a concept of recent origin either in Indian or Western social order. Gandhi himself said that he has nothing new to teach to the world, because truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. Though ahimsa is an old concept, yet it is a dynamic one, in the sense that it has been always under constant investigation, observation and development, reinvention and recreation.

During the Vedic period, though the practices of killing animals for sacrificial purposes were prevalent some of the Vedic thinkers started thinking in terms of non-injury as a virtue, thus beginning of the concept of Ahimsa at least as non-injury. The injunction for example:

‘M a Himsayet”, says it all.

One should not injure any one, clearly shows the beginning of the concept in the Vedic period. In the later period it was the Upanishadic seers who contributed to the growth of the concept of ahimsa in the Indian literature. Especially in Chhandogya Upanishad we find a verse as follows:

Ath yat Tapo Danam Arjavam Ahimsa

Satya-Vacanam Iti, Ta Asya Daksinah
(And austerity, alms giving, uprightness, non-violence, truthfulness, these are the gifts for priests). Chandogyopanishad also mentions Ahimsa as the first ethical restraint.

Brahman realization, i.e., the union of Atman with Brahman to attain Moksha was the ultimate aim of the Upanishadic seers. In the process of this search they realized that living a virtuous life is a necessary way which will lead them to their goal. So they used Ahimsa as one of the ethical steps and requisite to cleanse one's mind and heart from selfish desires and help him live a virtuous life for Brahman realization. Ahimsa even was considered seriously by many of the systems of Indian Philosophy. For example, in Patanjalis Yogasutra ahimsa is interpreted broadly as abstinence from malice towards all living creatures in every way and at all times. (Sarvatha Sarvada Sarvabhutanam Anabhidroha) According to Vaisesika thinker Prasastapada, ahimsa is one of the Universal duty which is obligatory for all, irrespective of caste and conditions of life. In the Mahabharata also ahimsa is laid down as the highest duty. Ahimsa is the highest religion, Ahimsa the highest discipline, Ahimsa is the highest penance, Ahimsa the highest sacrifice, Ahimsa is the highest happiness, Ahimsa the highest truth, Gift, ritual ablution holy merit—none is greater than Ahimsa.

In Pauranic literature too, ahimsa is prescribed as a duty. “Ahimsa Paramo Dharma, Ahimsaiva Param Tapah”. However much more emphasis was given to this concept of Ahimsa in the system of Lord Buddha and Mahavir, Buddhism emphasized universal compassion and love as ahimsa. When understood in this way
ahimsa calls for positive action to do away with sufferings of all beings. In Dhammapada it is said:

Him you call a Brahmin who is without hostile

Among those who are hostility,

Among those who is peaceful

Among those with uplifted staves, who is

Unattached among those who are attached:’

(A viruddham Viruddhesu attadandesu nibbutam sadanesu anadanam tam aham brumi brahmanam).

One can act with such love and compassion only when one is able to cultivate unselfishness by directing one mind and heart in right direction of true love and Gandhi’s Doctrine of Truth and Non-Violence—A Critical Study compassion for all. One way to make it possible is to “live delighting in and delighted by non-injury.

However, Ahimsa in its strictest and absolute sense figured prominently in Jaina Philosophy. In this system ahimsa implies not merely physical non-injury but non-injury in thought, word and deed to any living being. Here are some examples from Jaina Scriptures: “A religious should cease to injure living beings, for, this has been called the liberation which Consists in peace: The first vow in Acharanga Sutra says: “I renounce all killings of living being, whether subtle or gross, whether mobile or immobile. Neither shall I
myself kill living beings nor cause others to do it or consent to it, as long as I live...(I will observe this rule) in mind, speech and body: 12

Under the impact of Jainism and Buddhism, Ahimsa took a different turn. Gandhi’s assertion of ahimsa led many people to believe that he was Jaina by faith.

There is an interesting passage about Tilak’s view of Gandhi in one of Ajgaonkar’s reminiscences: Tilak asked me: What is Gandhi’s caste?” I replied Gandhi is a vaishya by caste and a vaishnav by religion.” Tilak looked surprised and replied. It is strange that up to now I did not know Gandhi’s religion was under the impression that Gandhi was a jaina because all his opinions and teachings favor of the Jaina religion—non-violence, Satyagraha, fasting etc. All these are more in keeping with Jaina teaching than the Hindu religion. 13 Gandhi therefore had to declare that he is an ardent follower of Hinduism known as Sanatana Dharma. He, much in opposition to his contemporaries, maintained that the concept of ahimsa is peculiarly a Hindu concept.

No doubt references about Ahimsa are also available in the writings of the western thinkers such as Tolstoy and Thoreau. Gandhi did read and was greatly impressed by their writings. He was also deeply influenced by the life of Jesus and his teachings especially by Sermon on the Mount: However, Gandhi claimed that his idea of ahimsa is basically rooted in Hindu tradition. Gandhi did not use the word Hindu in any sectarian sense which excludes other religion from its fold. But he understood by it a belief in an Eternal
Law which governs the universe. A religion based on such an eternal law underlies all religions and harmonizes them.

In the contemporary world, it is Gandhi who very strongly asserted the role and significance of ahimsa in individual as well as social life. Before Gandhi, the term non-violence was accepted both in Indian philosophy and religion as a religious virtue. Its presence was thought as an indicative of saintly life or as an important step for attainment of Moksha. Gandhi can be unquestionably given the credit for extending rather for widening the scope of ahimsa. In other words, Gandhi was mainly responsible for bringing it out from the boundaries of religion and getting it a place in normal political thinking. It was due to this theory and practice in the field of politics that won a place, the concept of ahimsa, in the vocabulary of politics.

Gandhi, however, was not contented with the literal meaning or popular meaning of ahimsa which is negative in character. Non-killing or non-injury seems to be signifying merely the absence of violence. Thus it creates the impression that the concept of ahimsa has no positive content. Gandhi rather deviated from the popular understanding and maintained that ahimsa does have a positive content which is much more valuable than its negative meaning. He says:

“In its negative form it means not injuring any Living being whether by body or mind, one may not, therefore, hurt the person of any wrongdoer or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental
suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill-will. Ahimsa requires deliberate self-suffering not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong-doer. In its positive form, Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me. This active Ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.\textsuperscript{14}

This extended meaning of ahimsa from mere non-injury or non-killing to love made Gandhi’s position different from Jaina concept of ahimsa because there is a marked difference between having an active love and being satisfied with mere absence of injury. Without bringing out a positive content of ‘good deeds’ ahimsa is likely to result into inaction. Gandhi was not ready to accept any doctrine which would bring in any kind of inaction in man. He rather believed in the dynamism of man. The constantly acting man for his moral growth is a man in the true sense of the term. Hence instead of being satisfied with the negative meaning of ahimsa he went on to develop a positive concept of ahimsa. Consequently, he said: “ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression”.\textsuperscript{15} Gandhi thought and argued that, harassment, torture, cheating, killing one’s self-respect etc. can be worse type of himsa than that of mere killing or injuring. On the contrary sometimes taking life may be a duty. Even killing a man is also necessary and permissible in certain cases; “suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, and killing any one
that comes in his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Anyone who despatches this lunatic will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded as a benevolent man.\textsuperscript{16}From this one may think that Gandhi was in favour of violence as he was supporting the killing of the ‘lunatic’? But if we look deep into the matter, we can see the spirit of non-violence lying behind it. Gandhi considers a man to be non-violent, benevolent, who kills a ‘lunatic’ because the man will put his own life at stake to kill the person. While killing the lunatic he can also lose his own life in the hands of the lunatic who has lost all his normal senses. In this position, if a man takes the risk of his own life to save others from the lunatic he can be best described as a non-violent person. Only a sense of love and intention of protecting others from evil and danger will activate a man to face the danger of being killed in the hands of lunatic. Ahimsa in its positive sense here implies sacrifice of one’s own life for the sake of others. Further the action of man is not based on hatred or ill-will for the said person. So Gandhi rightly observes, that humanity consists in letting others live even at the cost of one’s own life:’\textsuperscript{17}This shows that for Gandhi violence does not necessarily consists in taking life or wishing to take life, as we usually understand. On the other hand, destruction caused by natural course of our life, such as eating, breathing, walking, etc. is also not to be considered as violence. If at all by any measure it has to be called violence then Gandhi would prefer to call it unavoidable violence. For Gandhi violence consists in selfishness, anger, greed, lust, fear to face danger etc. as these are the main obstacles of man for which man fails to act in the spirit of selfless action for the sake
of greater benefit to humanity. In this sense Gandhi interprets Gita’s doctrine of Niskama Karma with his theory of ahimsa as love. Here it will be interesting to ask, where from Gandhi unearthed the positive meaning of ahimsa as love? Is it the Christian notion of love or compassion of Buddhism?

The answer to this is no. Gandhi’s positive meaning of ahimsa as love is much wider than that of the Christian notion of love or compassion of Buddhism. Both these system have developed their idea of love basing on some particular view of their own religious system, which consequently excludes some from practicing. Love in the religious doctrine of Christianity shows that Jesus is the only begotten son of God and faith on him as the only son alone will lead a man to eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.18 'He that believeth on the son with everlasting life; and he that believeth not the son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on. 19

As God loved man first, so it is the duty of man to love him and his creation. This is only possible through a belief on I by way of accepting the finality of His only begotten son. This implies that Christian notion of love is meaningful only through the belief in Jesus Thus it becomes a sectarian notion of love. As such the social ethics behind it is the ethics of fellow feeling of one Christian to another Christian and as a matter of fact it has narrowed down the
scope of the concept of love, and consequently failed to establish the
notion of universal kinship irrespective of caste, creed, religion etc.
Secondly, love is not equated with ahimsa, but it is described as,
Patient and kind, love is not jealous, or conceited, or proud; love is
not ill-mannered, or selfish, or irritable; love does not keep a record
of wrongs. Ethics behind it is the ethics of social harmony and
individual conduct. The notion of self sacrifice which it involves gets
its expression only within the religious context of Christianity.
However, Gandhi’s position is different. By giving a definition of
ahimsa as love and self-sacrifice in thought, word and deed, over
comes the dogmas of sectarian religion and has embraced the entire
humanity within its fold. Religion as understood by Gandhi is not
intended to separate society and divide it into various sects but it is
that which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which
ever purifies? His concept of ahimsa is not biased by any particular
religious doctrine. His concept of love is so exhaustive that, any
follower of a particular sect will fall within its fold if he is a flower of
ahimsa as the moral law. So he said, as soon as we lose the moral
basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion
over riding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel
and incontinent and claim to have God on his side?” In this sense of
the term, an atheist also, if he is moral then he is religious.

On the other hand Gandhi’s view is wider than that of
Buddhist notion of compassion also. Though Buddhism preached
ahimsa as universal compassion amongst all for Nirvana yet there is
a discrimination of practicing ahimsa between a householder and a
monk. Because Buddha believed that strict adherence to ahimsa is not possible by performing the worldly duties. He said, full of hindrances is household life, a path defiled by passion; free as the air is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. How difficult is it for the man who dwells at home to live the higher life in all its fullness, in all its purity in all its bright perfection; Let me then cut off my hair and beard, let me clothe myself in the orange coloured robes, and let me go forth from a householder life into the homeless state.\textsuperscript{20} In opposed to such thinking, Gandhi was against maintaining a dual standard of life. One single principle should be any discord between private and public life. But it has become a common practice to compartmentalize life with different principles. He, in protest against this system, placed ahimsa as the common principle for all to work out. It is not the privilege of saints alone to practice ahimsa. It is open to all, that is, even common people and householder should practice ahimsa. With a faith on ahimsa and right effort, ahimsa can be wielded equally by all-children, young men, women, or grown up. Gandhi believed in Gita's doctrine of renunciation in the sense that one can rise to the height of perfection by not renouncing the worldly life, but by renouncing the selfish desire of enjoying the fruits of one's own action. This understanding of life distinguishes Gandhi from other thinkers such as Tilak. For Tilak politics was a 'worldly game' of worldly people. Whereas for Gandhi all activities of man are to be performed in a manner as a Sadhu would perform including politics.
K. P. Karunakaran rightly observes that, it is very difficult to separate in watertight compartments the Gandhi, the social and religious reformer, from Gandhi, the political leader. Gandhi’s concept of ahimsa is wider in scope and connotes a deeper meaning, which eventually includes all other meanings of ahimsa as non-injury, fellow-feeling, charity, compassion, etc. Ahimsa stands for boundless love for all irrespective of caste, creed, religion, etc. It’s practice demands a paramount duty of protecting and helping others at the risk of one’s own life, from evil. This notion of love, in fact is more in tune with the Hindu tradition where self-sacrifice and suffering as practised in extensive measure right from domestic life to spiritual. No doubt the relationship of an individual with his family members is different, from that of his neighbour, friends, countrymen etc. But the point is that, though the relationship varies from person to person, within a family, community etc. the underlying principle of these relationship is always love in the form of willing self-sacrifice for others. A family exists on the foundation of self-sacrifice of each member of the family towards each other for the sake of unity and harmony. So is the case with bigger institutions like, society, states, country and mankind. Gandhi thus, basically differs from the hedonists who advocate the doctrine of ‘pleasure for pleasure sake’ and from the utilitarians who maintain the principle of ‘greatest happiness of the greatest number’. First of all, ahimsa as love will never demand something in return from others. It never takes revenges, but gives for the sake of love. Secondly, Gandhi never said that means justifies the end. Where as the utilitarian maxim logically implies that a method or a means of
acquiring happiness will always be justified if it produces the greatest happiness to the greatest number. This shows that followers of utilitarian maxim need not take it into consideration the intention of one’s action, as long as it produces the required effect. On the other hand, Gandhi was concerned not with the result of an action, but with the intention and mainly with the means of performing an action. It is not that, Gandhi was unaware regarding the problem of results or end of an action, but idea behind his emphasis over the means of an action and purity of individual’s mind is: that end or result will naturally follow from the means. The Results Meaning and Nature of Ahimsa or consequences are closely knit to the means adopted. The proper and right means will automatically lead to proper and right results. Goodness of an end depends on the goodness of the means.

Gandhi not only argued that non-violence is a positive concept but also a theory of action. He gave non-violence a much more significant place by saying that non-violence is the law of our being, as opposed to the law of violence which is the law of jungle. He said, “non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force: As a law of human race, ahimsa turns out to be the condition of human existence. Whether conscious of this law or not, man is in constant progress according to this law from cannibalism to a state of civilized nation. Gandhi said that, “had it been otherwise, the -human species should have been extinct by now as many of the lower species have disappeared.” Gandhi by existence does not mean the physical existence of man
which undergoes changes and annihilation like all other species. Man as a living organism is no doubt subject to many laws such as law of gravitation and different biological laws. These laws men share with animal kingdom. Apart from these laws men share another basic characteristic with animal world i.e., the exercise of brute force or violence. So Gandhi said, “We were perhaps, all originally brutes. I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute. Here Gandhi did not mean biological evolution of man, but the moral growth of man. According to Gandhi, ahimsa which he treated as the law of life is by nature a moral law, being the guiding principle of all action, and there should not be the manifested form of truth—the Eternal Moral Law in human Life. As such it is essentially different from other laws i.e., legal, religious, social, physical, biological etc. in the sense that these laws operate within specific areas of life. Ahimsa being the manifested form of the eternal moral law (Truth) it operates and is intended to regulate every sphere of human life without any exception. It implies that human life apart from biological and physiological aspects, as a whole is within the purview of one single law i.e., ahimsa. Consequently all other laws directing human behavior should be derived from the law of ahimsa. It amounts to saying that though an element of brute force is present in man, yet he is expected to struggle to follow moral law and thereby reduce the intensity of brutality in him. It automatically leads to an increase of the moral character in his life. Hence, to the extent a man has succeeded in eliminating violence or brute force from him, he has
grown in his moral character. In other words to that extent he has moved away from animal world.

Observation and experiments show that, man yields to love more naturally than to violence. The distinguishing feature of man from animal is not his physical peculiarities or the exercise of the law of violence, but the practice of higher law than this. The practice of Ahimsa requires as well as brings about a radical change in man. Gandhi calls it soul force normally there is no surprise if a man exercises ‘bruteforce’ because it is his heritage from animal world. Animals could be said to be in need of a law of violence to maintain their existence. In case we wish to distinguish ourselves from animal world, in Gandhian framework the only way is by giving up the law of violence and by accepting the law of non-violence as a creed. Gandhi observes:

“Human nature will find itself expressed when it fully realized that to be human it has to cease to be beastly or brutal. Though we have the human form, without the attainment of the virtue of non violence we still share the qualities of our remote reputed ancestors, the Ourang - Ourang”23 The nature and importance of Ahimsa, thus understood, makes it obligatory on us to accept it as a creed and not merely as a policy. It should become the basic principle of individual as well as social life. To elaborate the practice and principle of Ahimsa, Gandhi laid down five axioms.

1. “Non-violence implies a complete self purification as is humanly possible.
2. Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

3. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

4. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

5. The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory—if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.  

These axioms could be seen as a coherent whole wherein one step leads naturally to the next.

The first step is individual self for abnegation of self desires, and sacrifice of selfish inclinations for bringing oneself close to others. To be non-violent means to be benevolent as much as possible and ready to sacrifice one for others. The achievement of these as personality traits requires the following of rigorous discipline in life. Unless one purifies oneself from one's own selfish desires, anger, hatred, by strictly following a discipline, one will never be able to identify oneself with the rest of mankind. The principle “All Men are Brothers” will not stand internalized. In Gandhian thought self-purification and altruism goes hand in hand. Good of all can only be achieved by purifying oneself. Frank
Buchman comes very close to Gandhi when he says, ‘unless we deal with human nature thoroughly and drastically on a colossal scale nations will still follow their historic road of violence and destruction. The successful way of dealing with human nature is to bring a change in their nature. But while doing this we should remember two things that—we cannot expect others to be what we ourselves are not, and if we really want a change in others, we must put the change first in our lives: 25 The two factors of love and sacrifice, according to Gandhi acts as a force which can break through the walls of isolation which man builds around him by becoming excessively egoistic. Form also makes the same point. He said:

“Love is an active power in man: a power which breaks through the walls which separates man from his fellow men which unifies him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of, isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. The love the paradox occurs that two beings became one and yet remain two.26

Gandhi went a step ahead and emphasized that identification with everything that lives is possible through love and pure heart without which the observance of the law of ahimsa will remain as ‘an empty dream However, the path of self-purification is the most difficult one. One has to become absolutely passion free in thought, speech and action. One has to rise above the attachment and repulsion. “To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder, far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms.27
Thus to overcome this most difficult thing one has to undergo a strict discipline and train one's mind. Here comes in the idea of tapas in Gandhi's thought. Gandhi shared the generally accepted meaning of the term tapas or tapasaya in the Indian tradition. Indian thinkers maintained that in order to achieve the higher ends of life one has to learn to work, in accordance with conscience and not to be a slave of bodily comforts or passions. Several methods of putting body under check and allow the rule of conscience or soul, have been recommended. In Gandhian thought such tapasaya or self-purification is necessary to be able to put non-violence into actual practice i.e., in the life of a tapasvi non-violence is not merely a theory but it is his life style. This leads to the second axioms of Gandhi's account of non-violence.

One's belief and acceptance of non-violence does not consist in one's will to be non-violent but does consist in his ability of acting non-violently. This dismisses the possibilities for a coward to take the cover of non-violence. The credit and honour goes to a person who in spite of his own ability to act violently stands firmly on principle for non-violence as a law of life and act accordingly in all circumstances. To such person non-violence becomes a creed rather than a policy. A creed has to be all pervasive and would not accept exceptions. Because, "laws to be laws admits no exceptions." Gandhi, thus argued for the acceptance of non-violence as a creed and not as a policy.

In the third axiom it is stated that, the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than that of the power of
violent person. Firm adherence to the principle of ahimsa and the requisite tapasya or observance of rigorous ethical discipline a moral power in man is produced. The impact and change provided by this moral power is bound to be everlasting than the changes produced by violence, in fact, we can say that violence does not make any change in the real sense of the term. It only suppresses. Hence, as long as violence continues, suppression will also continue. The moment violence ceases to exist, the old problems will reappear. Because it only succeeds in changing the direction of one's action by force, but not the very desire of violence from man's heart. Non-violence as a moral power that aims at changing the heart of the opponent with love and helps him to realize the value of ahimsa as a mode of action. This way of bringing a change in human nature is far more affective. It is in fact a genuine conversion. A social change is possible only when real conversion takes place at the individual level, the structural changes might marginally affect the situation but a genuine as well as permanent society is possible only through the method of self-purification. With more and more purification the individuals will become capable of following the path of non-violence as a creed. The non-violent method of change is preferable as it is not a threat to individual dignity, freedom of will and creativity. Thus non-violence is conducive to an integrated personality and social harmony.

According to Gandhi, the only method of developing moral power in individual is the path of rigorous ethical discipline. Any deviation from it would count as violence. The violence is in fact an
exercise of brute force. The successful exercise of violence or brute force is relative or conditional to the abilities of the opponent to exercise brute force. Non-violence on the other hand is in no way dependent on the opponent’s abilities. It is only upto the individual to fail or succeed in exercise of non-violence. The failure means he has not adequately developed moral power in him. Hence, the failure should be taken as an indication of one’s deficiency in the process of self-purification. An adequately grown moral power is bound to achieve success.

The natural corollary of the above axiom led Gandhi to say that, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violence, whereas the force of violence always ends up in defeat. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that non-violence is a superior power to force. Violence inherently contains the idea of competition. Competition is likely to result into a mutual quarrel, hatred and jealousy. In other words competition increases the distance between individuals. They become more and more self-centered. However individual and society could grow and live happily if they learn the principle of togetherness. The principle which brings closeness between man and man has to be discovered and practiced. Non-violence is the principle that could obtain the desirable end. The self-destroying nature of violence should count as a good reason for its rejections and the self-sustaining character of non-violence provides the good reason to adopt it. In violence the two ideas are (1) Overpowering of the opponent and (ii) competition which is inherent, consequently, violence as a theory of action is bound to be harmful for society. On
the contrary a believer of non-violence neither wants to overpower others nor to compete with others to achieve anything for him. He rather acts out of a sense of moral duty to help each member of the society it is possible only when one learns to co-operate and not to compete. Only through the principle of co-operation which is underlying the concept of non-violence, one can aim at a universal end i.e., the good of all (Sarvodaya). Any society which will fail to guarantee the good or rise of all its members is bound to be violent and therefore, unjust according to Gandhi. Its implications are that Gandhi will not accept Marxism, utilitarianism, hedonism etc. as adequate theories of social change.

Given the above analysis, it is obvious that Gandhi makes a conceptual and logical point that there is no defeat of non-violent and there is sure victory in non-violence. The question of defeat and victory in terms of violence is always relative and conditional. Accordingly the victory or defeat whichever occurs in relation to violence is treated as victory or defeat of the person concerned.

Secondly, the question of defeat or victory in exercising violence always involves two parties. Because one cannot exercise violence and win over or loose the battle, until and unless, the other party also responds in the same way. The moment this relationship of exercising violence ceases, the relative balance of defeat and victory also collapses. It proves that, defeat and victory in relation to violence are relative and conditional term.
On the other hand, in case of non-violence this relativity of defeat and victory never occurs. Firstly the power of exercising non-violence does not depend on any external agency. It also does not dependent on the response of the other man. It never involves two parties as arguing parties. Thus in the usual sense of the term, the term victory and defeat are inapplicable in Gandhian framework. In case in a given situation the exercise of non-violence has not been able to yield the desired results, it is not because the opponent has more power. It is precisely because the virtue of non-violence has not grown sufficiently in the person. He ought to develop more to discipline himself and become more and more non-violent. The method has the advantage that is instead of making us egoistic, it will make a person humble. Humility in fact will help him/ her to perfect himself/ herself. On the other hand, if one succeeds in exercising the power of non-violence still then it does not involve the relative victory for the person concerned, as there occured the question of comparison with others. In fact, victory (if allowed to use the word) of non-violence indicates the victory of the principle itself and not of the person as it is the case with violence. Non-violence thus, involves a sense of humility which makes it a sure case of success, as it makes a way for cooperation instead of competition.

In exercising the power of non-violence, cooperation is possible firstly because it does not involve two opposite parties and secondly non-violence as universal love cannot entertain the idea of competing with each other. It is a process of love and
understanding. Being so, all people at a time together can exercise the power of non-violence without loosing anything. It is the greatest advantage of non-violence over violence. The strength of non-violence is greater than violence as it involves one single cooperative party working in the same direction instead of fighting a loosing game. Hence, non-violence is the only proper and most appropriate method to be followed for organizing individual life as well as social life. On the strength of this Gandhi propounded an ethical theory which gives detailed practices for transformation of human nature. Each individual should start practising Ahimsa. The practice of ahimsa will automatically take care of the different aspect such as domestic, religious, political, social etc. These, instead of remaining as isolated elements, will be woven into a whole. The whole at the root will be seeking constant guidance from the principle of ahimsa. Thus the law which governs the individual life ultimately gains significance at the level of society. Thus Ahimsa has a widest possible scope. It begins with individual and encompasses not only individual societies but the mankind as a whole. It harmonizes individual’s interest with social interest.

It is only on this basis that we could seek to establish a social order which would be genuinely socialistic in character. On the one hand unrestricted individualism is likely to result in chaos and on the other hand social compulsion threatens the dignity and honour of man. In order to escape from these difficulties and to establish an ideal social order i.e., Ram Rajya, one has to look for non-violence as the basic principle. Violence in any form cannot serve our purpose.
Martin Luther said that violence is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. It destroys comradeship and makes brotherhood impossible. It leaves society in a monologue than dialogue. Violence ends up defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers.’

Although Gandhi believed in ahimsa as a basic principle of life yet he did not maintain that perfect practice of ahimsa is possible in life. Perfect non-violence is impossible as long as one lives in a physical body. For Gandhi ahimsa is a theoretical ideal. There is no such thing as unadulterated non-violence in this world. Gandhi said, “We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of himsa. Cannot live for a moment without consciously or unconsciously committing outward himsa?”

Although a believer of ahimsa will constantly grow by observing self-restraint and develop compassion, yet we will never be able to be completely free ourselves from external violence.

Gandhi’s view of ahimsa was a typically a Hindu view. In Hindu tradition the three levels of the practice of himsa have been identified. Primarily, someone is guilty of committing the acts of violence. Secondly, the one who helps, instigates or conspire in committing the acts of violence is also accused of being violent. Thirdly, the one who silently observes and does nothing to prevent the perpetuations of violence is also guilty of committing violence. Thus ahimsa is not merely the absence of himsa from one’s own behaviour but to sincerely work to prevent other individuals or society as a whole from committing the act of violence. Thus ahimsa
becomes a supreme moral restraint to be applied to every branch of human action. Although himsa is unavoidable yet it is possible for a believer of ahimsa to be sincere in his effort to live up to it. It amounts to saying that the success achieved by a practitioner of ahimsa is necessarily bound to be relative but his faith in ahimsa should be total. The desire to possess anything is the greatest impediment in becoming non-violent. The possessions include even one's body. In other words the attachment of body will lead to the desire of bodily comforts. Thus it is desirable for the practitioner of non-violence to give up even the love of his own physical body. Renunciation of all possessions as well as possessive instincts is the root of ahimsa. As long as we exist in flesh and blood, our very existence is based on some act of violence. Since it is very difficult rather impossible for anyone to completely get rid of the will to live, some amount of himsa is bound to remain as long as we are in this human body. If the ideal in its fulness cannot be realized, then our aim should be to reach as close to it as possible. The way to least violence should be our way.

Gandhi’s recognition that some amount of himsa is unavoidable brought him very close to committing a contradiction. However, being sincere to his thinking in his own life he did order the killing of a mad dog, killing of an ailing calf etc. It brought him under a severe attack from his Indian contemporaries. However, Gandhi maintained his point. He said that if one has to be an agriculturist, it is highly essential that he protects his crop from animals. Not doing so, will be rather a case of himsa as it would cause
famine. To cause a danger to human life by way of inviting a famine is much more sinful than protecting the crops from animals. ‘Evil and good are, relative terms. What is good under certain condition can become an evil or a sin under a different set of condition?’ To prevent a child by force from rushing to fire cannot be declared as an act of violence. It may appear so. Actually the use of force is not done with a sense of revenge or ill-will against the child. Hence, to such a use of force, it will be wrong to say that it is violence. Gandhi even went farther and said: “taking life may be a duty. We do destroy as much life as we think necessary for sustaining our body. Even manslaughter may be necessary in certain cases.”

Of course Gandhi had to face a host of criticisms from his contemporaries both for his theory and its application. He on the contrary accused people of misunderstanding and misinterpreting his theory as well as for wrong application of his doctrine. Gandhi’s so firm assertion of ahimsa was bound to his presuppositions about nature, man and history. Those who actually either did not share or understand these presuppositions had difficulties in grasping the logical structure of his thought. He perceived that it is the destiny of India to deliver the message of non-violence to the world. Thus, he made it his own mission to work in this direction. It may take ages to come to fruition. But so far as I can judge no other country will precede her (India) in the fulfillment of that mission.”

The missionary zeal in him made him not only a propounder of a philosophical account of non-violence but also a great propagandist of this. It is however, undeniable that Gandhi’s so
rigid and extreme formulation of ahimsa has brought in an element of utopia in his theory. It is also perhaps undeniable that nobody else in the contemporary period has so forcefully rejected the worshipping of force. Not only this, the whole point of Gandhi’s argument is that force or violence necessarily carries with it the fact of demoralization. Those who would like to maintain the moral autonomy and moral dignity of man will have to take Gandhi seriously. Whatever may be said as the criticisms of the doctrine of non-violence but it cannot be denied that the theory of ahimsa replaced the principle of meek submission to evil and injustice by a dynamic doctrine of activity in the name of truth and justice. The doctrine of ahimsa has challenged a common presupposition that the use of force is morally permissible because it has an ethical end.

Gandhiji could be termed a practical idealist given his interest in that part of Indian concepts which could be ethically translated into practice. When Gandhiji brought certain religious concepts into the acid test of practical affairs he never deviated from the very spirit of those concepts, but he preserved them. He changed only those concepts which were ethically and scientifically unsound. Ahimsa (non-violence) was considered to be an individual virtue from Vedic times but nobody thought of practicing that virtue in social and political life. The concept of Ahimsa though developed by Buddha, Gandhiji’s novelty lies in transforming it from an individual virtue into a mode of social action. Similarly Truth is a traditional individual value in India which he applied in all spheres of his life, and insisted on practicing absolute truth but not relative
truth. Truth to him was above all gods. He also proved how ethics can be transformed into good polities and good economies. Standing from traditional Indian spiritual and religious backtround, Gandhiji was concerned with finding out how these could be put into practice and proved beyond doubt their applicability impractical life. To Gandhiji religion must be cultivated consciously in order to make it a way of life. His aim was to live religion – in thought in action in speech: and not simply to discovering it. To him a morel action is equivalent to thousand of mystic thoughts and spiritual discourses. According to Gandhiji action is the foundation for human life. Self-sacrifice non violence brotherhood renunciation. Love, Truthfulness, Brahmacarya, Non – hoarding etc. serve the datum of a model man’s philosophy. For him conduct is the acid test from which we have to construe philosophy and religion. Gandhi himself writes, if I had only involved discussing academic principles I should clearly not attempt an autobiography. But my purpose is to give an account of various practical implications of these principles. I have given the chapters I propose to write the title of “The Story of my Experiments with Truth this will of course include experiments with non – violence celibacy another principles of conduct believed to be distinct from Truth.” Rathmound referring to Gandhiji’s practice of age old Indian ideas observes thus “ the principles of transcendence and immanence is the core of Indian Philosophy but its implications to political and social ethics is Gandhiji’s creation. Thus we can see that the Mhatma was not an academic, and he had no need to any academic polemics. He really demonstrated unity of thought and action: for indeed what is thought if it does not have any bearing on
action. The Mahatma really makes a great contribution to humanity through his views regarding how religion and philosophy are to be constructed through one’s living life by what he names as experimenting with truth.

Satyagraha: It is one violence or ahimsa that manifest as Satyagraha. Satyagraha is actually another vision of Niskama Karma; one is only standing for Truth and standing against evil. To do this is simply his Dharma alone: as the very nature of any man who is searching for and experimenting with Truth. On the first place, a man in order to be authentic and genuine ought to be true, non-violent etc. Thus it is only spontaneous for him to be a sathyagrahi. These ideas may appear to be very lofty and difficult for common people to achieve; it may seem that only selected few people and Rsis are capable of performing them. But Gandhiji is very confident that every common man is capable of them, because it comes naturally from the very nature of authentic human existence. A satyagrahi should be against the evil and most certainly not against the evil-doer.

Satyagraha is a technique used by Gandhiji to gain political freedom. But this was not an end. Satyagraha has a deep rooted meaning. For him political freedom is necessary to attain spiritual freedom. Gandhiji says, “My patriotism is for me in my going to the land of eternal freedom and peace”\textsuperscript{34}.

Satyagraha means non-violent action combined with truth and love. Gandhiji termed it as loveforce or soul force. It is a means
of fighting injustice by voluntarily submitting oneself to suffering. Satyagraha is always unflinching adherence to Truth. Satyagraha implies the vindication of Truth not by inflicting suffering on the opponent, but to one’s own self.

The word ‘satyagraha’ originated from two Sanskrit words ‘satya’ (truth or right) and ‘agraha’ (firmness or determination). The term ‘passive resistance’ which Gandhiji used first as a technique was subsequently changed by him as Satyagraha. This change was made because the word ‘passive resistance’ suggests a negative sense, whereas the word Satyagraha suggests the active principle of love. Gandhiji always believed that love is the only means for realizing truth. Satyagraha is a truth-force as opposed to violence or armed struggle. It excludes the use of violence because as man is capable of knowing Absolute Truth, he is not to punish anybody. To gandhiji beauty and efficacy of Satyagraha is very great but at the same time it is too simple to be preached even by a child. Gandhiji emphatically states,

“In brief the sign of Satyagraha is consists the quest for the principle of life”\textsuperscript{35}

According to Gandhiji, Satyagraha is like an all-sided sword that can be used everywhere and at any time. It blesses him who uses it and against whom it is used. It can attain a far-reaching result without shedding a single drop of blood. Satyagraha is not a weapon of the weak. It requires rigorous physical and mental training. Satyagraha depends only on Truth and one’s capacity to
suffer for truth. For, where there is no strength of mind, then, there cannot be any strength of soul. Therefore, a satyagrahi who wants to serve the country has to cultivate certain moral qualities like perfect chastity, poverty, truthfulness and fearlessness.

Gandhiji deduced the principle of Satyagraha from the teachings of Bhagawad Gita which exhorts its followers to go on working without attachment to the fruits of work. Gandhiji says:

“\textit{He who is free such attachment will not kill enemy but rather sacrifice himself. Killing any enemy proceeds from impatience and impatience proceeds from attachment}^{36}. And he continues: “\textit{As far as 1889, when I had my first contact with the Gita, it gave me a hint of Satyagraha and, as I read it more and more, the hint developed into a full revelation of Satyagraha}^{37}.

According to Gandhiji, there cannot be Satyagraha for an unjust cause. Even for a just cause it may fail to achieve the end if the satyagrahis are not having strong determination and capable of fighting and suffering to the end. A Satyagrahi must exclude the use of violence in any form whether in thought, speech or action. If the cause is just one and the Satyagrahis retain the capacity for endless suffering avoiding violence, then victory is a must. A satyagrahi must always remain calm and unperturbed even under any kind of provocation.

The method of Satyagraha is possible only when people by nature are fearless, lovers of poverty, and cultivate the spirit of tolerance. He can be a Satyagrahi who has the heart to sacrifice his
property and even his own family, whenever necessary. To such a Satyagrahi, God’s help is assured, as Gandhi says:

“I see that Satyagraha is assured of divine help, and that in testing a Satyagrahi, the Creator imposes on him at every step only as much burden as he can bear.” 38 Gandhiji considered that suffering undergone in the purest form of Satyagraha is tapasya or penance.

Gandhiji mentioned three principles regarding the goal, means and results of Satyagraha. The first implies that the original demand for satyagrah should not be increased; the second implies that whatever is gained by Satyagraha should be retained by Satyagraha alone and lastly, whatever is not attainable by Satyagraha cannot be retained by any other means. It knows no defeat on either side. From the lower point of view the aim of Satyagraha is the service of humanity and from the higher standpoint it is moksa or liberation. The result of Satyagraha is always good if the principles are strictly followed. Gandhiji says:

“The purpose of Satyagraha is not to save our face but to instill courage into the people and make them independent in spirit. If, because of fear, or distrust of us, people looose heart and pay up, they deserve to pay (compulsorly). We on our part, should exert ourselves still more to be worthy of their trust. This is the royal road to satyagraha”.39
Satyagraha should be practiced without thinking of the result and it should make no difference whether the expected goal is reached or not. Gandhiji says.

“The extraneous factors cannot affect satyagraha the victory of a single member may be taken to mean victory of all, but the defeat of the side as a whole does not spell defeat for the person who has not himself yielded” 40.

Sathyagraha pre-supposes the ultimate victory of Truth; it incites the freedom of the soul. Gandhiji compares Satyagraha to a banyan tree in which Satya (truth) and Ahimsa (Non violence) represent the parent trunk with innumerable branches of which civil disobedience is one.

In conclusion, we may say that Satyagraha is not a new word. Gandhiji used it only to give new meaning to human life in its multifarious activities. Ultimately he used it as a technique for the realization of soul-force in man, because it is based on the faith in the inherent goodness of man. Hence, the sole aim of Gandhiji was to make aware of this point and to make best use of it for bringing about peace with an earnest zeal and for the sake of realizing truth. Thus we can see that Gandhiji succeeded in devising yet another method for achieving moksha through his theory of Satyagraha. In addition, by attributing a transcendental connotation to the theory of Satyagraha, the Mahatma was designing yet another marga for Moksha.
“But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for the society” 41

Gandhiji says, God, who is all powerful, has no need to store. He created from day to day and not stock things. If this truth is imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and trusteeship would become a legalized institution. As to the successor, the trustee in office would have the right to nominate his successor subject to legal sanction.

Working for economic equality, means, abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the leveling down of the few rich in whose bands I concentrated the bulk of the nation’s wealth on the one hand, and a leveling up of the semi starved, naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces, New Delhi and the miserable Hovels, in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest, have in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day, unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for common good. According to Gandhiji, “Economic equality did not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount.it simply means that everybody should have enough for his or her need” 42
Gandhiji did not taboo the riches of the wealthy but he was of the opinion that these should come only after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. Every Indian should reduce his wants to a minimum bearing in mind the poverty of India.

It is possible to see Mahatma Gandhi as an extension to Buddha I wish to see Gandhi in this perspective here. Though Buddhism was originally designed for everyone, especially the very common and illiterate people, we see that at many times Buddhism also remaining in philosophical hights. At any rate philosophical Buddhism could never reach common people. Practically Buddhism also remained on the very high pedestal like Vedic Hinduism itself. Though Buddha originally used pali we find later Buddhist switching back to Sanskrit. Thus inspite of all desires from Buddha to make his teaching to everyone, it also ultimately become the cups of tea for the intellectuals only.

But then with Mahatma Gandhi most of the desires of Buddha become actualized though indirectly. The principles of Buddha can be said to have become the principles of the common people through that half- naked fakir who himself never had any Philosophical training. Indirectly the Light of Asia did illuminate the Mahatma but the Mahatma hold this light and walked among the poor, the miserables the untouchables etc showing them the world around and taking them to liberation.
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