CHAPTER IV
SWARAJ AND SELF REALIZATION

Mahatma Gandhi used the term swaraj referring apparently to the removal of the British rule from India and the installation of a national government instead. Externally we do not find much of a difference between the meanings of the word swaraj expressed by Dada Bhai Naoroji, Lok Manaya Tilak and Gandhi. But it may be noted that Gandhi used the term swaraj in a much broader sense.

Dada Bhai Naoroji proclaimed the goal of swaraj as political autonomy. He said, we want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word "Self government or swaraj like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." ¹

Lok Manaya Tilak, the writer of Gita Rahasya provided with India the mantra of freedom, "swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it,"² swaraj was nothing beyond the political freedom before Gandhi gave its true meaning. According to Gandhi, the word swaraj, is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self rule and self restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means.

Gandhi had used the word swaraj in the traditional sense of the word. It is not just political freedom or freedom from the British rule but in a positive sense swaraj means the rule of self. However self rule demands knowledge of the individual self. Only the knowledge of self could help in the attainment of spiritual freedom, i.e. freedom from the illusions of separateness and freedom to realise the universal self.

According to Gandhi an individual who is not spiritually free has no right to claim political freedom. Even if he attains it,
he will lose it soon enough. Gandhi believed that before demanding political freedom from the Britishers, Indians are required to do some introspection and find out the cause of their subjugation. The cause of our slavery lies in our own weaknesses. He writes in Hind swaraj,

"The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength but because we keep them ... They came to our country originally for the purpose of trade. Recall the Company Bahadur. Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at that time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company Officer? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once we welcomed the company's officers with open arms. We assisted them. If I am in the habit of drinking bhang and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself?...... A true servant of India will have to go to the root of the matter ...... If you pose as a physician for the disease of India, you will have to find its true cause."4

He writes further in Hind swaraj regarding the cause of our slavery. That it were our princes who sought the help of the Britishers while fighting among themselves. The Hindu-Muslim enmity gave the Company circumstances to control over India. Thus he concludes, "Hence it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost."4 "The English entered India for the purposes of trade. They remain in it for the same purpose and we help them to do so."5

Gandhi made it very clear in the first few chapters of Hind swaraj that nobody can enslave a man who is above the
weakness for silver and bodily pleasures. If man rises above his weakness for the material objects, nobody can enslave him. He is a liberated man. In reality, man is a slave of his own passions first and then the world enslave him by exploiting his weakness. Nobody can enslave a liberated man. So the freedom of the self from the shackles of passions and body is a precondition for political freedom. Political freedom from the yoke of the British will not make Indians free and liberated from their own weaknesses. In these conditions when the Indians are going away from their own tradition and following blindly the Western civilization, nobody can save them. Even if the Britishers leave India and the Indian succeed in forming their self government politically, it shall not be better than the British rule in any way. It shall be English rule without the English. It is not swaraj, according to Mahatma Gandhi. It may be political freedom. Gandhi has infact criticized the Western civilization which makes man body-oriented or body centred. It makes man money minded, materialistic and a profit seeker at the cost of moral values, spirituality and religion. He said it is this desire for wealth and profit only which has blinded the English and they see no human values, morality and religion. If India has to save itself, it has to get out of the Western civilization and embrace the Indian tradition. Western civilization will not change the fate of the millions of poor people living in India.

Gandhi believed that in the given situation even if the Indians attain the self-rule, they would start exploiting their own brothers as the Britishers are doing. It was his belief that so long as man is guided by greed and not by service, by competition and not by co-operation there can be no swaraj. In such a situation in spite of political freedom, Indians will be exploited at the hands of Indians which shall be worse than the foreign rule. He says that
the swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessaries of life should be enjoyed by people in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the moneyed men. But that does not mean that they should have palaces like their's. To him they are not necessary for happiness. You or I will be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys. But he says I have not the slightest doubt that the swaraj is not Pooran swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it.

He says in this context, "the swaraj of my/ our own dream recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons or yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving, toiling millions." 6

He says that swaraj is the rule of all people, is the rule of justice. Whether under that rule the ministers were Hindus or Musalmans or Sikhs and whether legislatures were exclusively filled by the Hindus or Musalmans or any other community. They would have to do even -handed justice.

Gandhi does not indent to replace Britishers with the Indians, rather he wants to replace the Western civilization by the Indian civilization for attaining the true swaraj. Self discipline or the rule over self is the first condition of self rule or swaraj, according to Gandhi. Let us concentrate on this first condition, that is, self rule or self government or self control. Swaraj is not the equivalent of the English word freedom. Gandhi says that the word should mean more than political freedom. He said it is difficult to find a single word which provides the meaning of swaraj in English. The meaning of the word 'swaraj' given by Dada Bhai Naoroji and Tilak was limited to only political freedom but according to Gandhi political freedom alone is an incomplete meaning of the word swaraj. He has tried to make a distinction.
between freedom and swaraj like this, “The root meaning of swaraj is self-rule. swaraj may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within .... 'Independence' has no such limitation. Independence may mean licence to do as you like, swaraj is positive, independence is negative ...”

Gandhi has used the term swaraj in a comprehensive and broader way. He has tried to find out the true meaning of swaraj, i.e., a combination of political and spiritual freedom. In the Indian tradition we find that both political and spiritual freedom are inherently connected. We may call both the concepts as external freedom and internal freedom respectively Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi’s primary text of Hinduism, saw the liberated individual as one who acts without craving, possessiveness and finds peace in the awareness of the infinite spirit thereby freed from delusions.

The Chandogya Upanisad defines freedom in a spiritual sense: “Self-governing autonomy and unlimited freedom in all world, were the traits of swaraj in the sage. As in the Gita, this liberation evolved from a higher consciousness, an awareness of the unity of all being, the identity of oneself with the universal self or Atman.”

In Bhagavad Gita we find that the individual is a moral agent aspiring for his own spiritual liberation. It would be worthwhile to quote the great verses from the Bhagavad Gita where the liberated man or a sage or a Karam Yogi or a man of discipline is depicted. It reads as follows:

“संन्यसयायाय ग्रामं सर्वैं सम्बुद्धायः।
ते प्राणियति मामेव सर्वत्रूति हिते रता:॥”

The Bhagavad Gita has defined the man of self discipline as he who has full control on his senses and who is even minded i.e. accepting the opposites, like pleasure and pain calmly every
where and above all leads the life of full involvement. But his involvement in the world is not for seeking profits and doing violence to others, but seeking love of God through loving humanity and true love means doing disinterested service.

Man should not waste his life in loving the material objects rather he should love humanity and try to remove its sufferings and sorrows. Such a man who spends his whole life thoroughly in the service of humanity, attains liberation. So Liberation or swaraj is possible through the control of passions and senses and serving the suffering people as if one is engrossed in God's love or Bhakti or devotion. Only such people, whose lives are dedicated to the welfare of suffering humanity, attain God's love or liberation or Moksha or happiness and Spiritual freedom or the true bliss.

In the above verse of Bhagavad Gita we find that both the meanings of swaraj, i.e. inner swaraj and outer swaraj, internal swaraj or External swaraj individual swaraj or collective swaraj merg into each other. Here we find the roots of Gandhian Concept of swaraj, having the twin meaning into swaraj, i.e. spiritual freedom and political freedom merging into each other. Bhagavad Gita brought Gandhi into politics of doing service and not the politics of gaining power for self indulgence.

His search for spiritual freedom pushed him to political life i.e. the life of action, where he started seeing God in the faces of other human beings. The suffering of humanity has accorded him personal suffering and he aimed at removing it altogether from the face of earth. But being a human being, his bodily limitations were also there. Being a practical idealist, he had to start his project of liberating the world society from all suffering, i.e., injustice from some particular point. This particular point he located, in the Christian doctrine of 'Love thy Neighbour i.e. his own countrymen. He believed that when his own country men
are suffering, he cannot leave them in the state of suffering and look for the world problems. No body can attain Moksha or happiness or see the Truth by running away from ones surroundings where his own countrymen are crying for care and attention. For him, the love of God is possible through the love of men who are around you and ‘love’ means rendering concrete service to others whole-heartedly without desiring anything in return. It's return comes not from those whom we serve but from God, in the form of His love. This is the state of swaraj.

Bhagavad Gita made it very clear to him that there is God in man. To realize this truth while alive meant Moksha for him. It is the realization of Self. Bhagavad Gita is full of verses, where God is shown to be in the universe, in men, animals and nature as a whole. It is for the seeker of swaraj to see Him in man and in His Creation. But how is this possible? Gita states very clearly how one can we see Him every where. The following two verses of Gita exemplify the same:

"यदा भूतपूर्वभावभेदकर्मनुपरयति।। तत एव विरस्थारं ब्रह्म सम्पदाते तदा।। "10

The concentration by Yoga is a must to attain the state of evenness for all living things. Such a man can see the self in all beings and all beings in the self.

Bhagavad Gita further asks man to rise above the world of sensations and turn towards the self, in order to liberate oneself. In the next Shloka, the meaning is clearly explained thus:

"यो माम परायति सर्वं च मर्थं परयति।। तस्यां न प्रणवामि स च मे प्रणवयति।। "11

It means that one who sees Me in all things and sees all things in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him.
Gandhi realized that the love of man was the first step towards the love of God. The divine knowledge of Bhagavad Gita made it clear that man is required to realise the inherent unity of all beings despite the visible diversity. All is in God and God is in all is the core message of Bhagavad Gita. When man realizes that every animate and in animate creature is a part of God, the problem of 'Otherness' disappears. One starts seeing God everywhere, even in one's opponent. This lesson of complete humanism had been experienced by Gandhi from Bhagavad Gita. Accordingly spiritual identity with every thing filled Gandhi's heart with love.

But the realization of this unity by one or few does not solve the worldly problems as the world is full of those people who have not yet attained their spiritual swaraj. A spiritually liberated man cannot leave the problems posed by ignorant men who are the product of bad civilization- a civilization which takes man away from God, morality and confronts him with other men just for the material gains. He has criticised the modern Western civilization which has enslaved man, as it aims at the bodily welfare and has done a great harm to humanity. Manual labour's place has been taken by machine and it has resulted in doing a great harm to man. It has resulted in the alienation of man and made him diseased. It has made him unemployed resulting in his humiliation.

Gandhi has painted the picture of the Western Civilization which aims at increasing bodily comforts. He writes in this context

"This civilization is irreligious and it has taken such a hold on the people of Europe that those who are in it appear to be half-mad. They lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be
happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of household, wander in the streets or they slave away in factories..... This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self destroyed. According to the teachings of Mohamed this would be considered a satanic civilization. Hinduism calls it the black age."\textsuperscript{12}

Gandhi has raised his voice against the race for material comforts. The unlimited urge for body comforts is a slavery of ones body. He reminded that our ancestors were above such weaknesses. "They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs. A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others."\textsuperscript{13}

Gandhi has defined the true civilization in Hind swaraj like this, "civilization is the mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct."\textsuperscript{14}

He warned the Indians against imitating the Western civilization, the civilization of money and body worship. He has reminded us that happiness is a mental condition. "A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures."\textsuperscript{15}

The Bhagavad Gita has very clearly and precisely explained the same thing in just two Shlokas and we find sufficient reason for Gandhi's condemnation of the Western civilization, where man has lost all his spirituality and concern for
other man. The lust for bodily pleasures is the cause of his moral death. Man forgets his relation with his family, nature, animals and above all God and sinks in the ocean of passion for material objects. The following two Shlokas had great influence on Gandhi's concept of swaraj. He wanted internal as well as external swaraj to be based on these two Shlokas which is the cause of man's peril. These are:

"ध्यायतो विष्णुपुरं संज्ञा सुपुष्पकायते।।
संज्ञाय भाषणे कामः कामातुः क्रोधोभिज्ञायते।।"¹⁶

"क्रोधातुः भवतिसम्मोहः सम्मोतहसमृतिविभ्रमः।।
समृतिभ्रष्टाद्वृद्धिनामो चुदिनाशात्त्विश्वाय।।"¹⁷

The objects of sense are the root cause of man's destruction. All evils arise from it and man's capacity for right thinking is lost. For his material satisfaction man starts treating the other persons also as the means of his satisfaction. It is violence. Man becomes attached not only with other objects of the world and men for his own gratifications and enjoyment. This enjoyment and attachment leads to longing for them and he becomes angry over the situation when it is not according to his desires. This leads to delusion results in the loss of memory; when man loses his memory he is unable to make discrimination and when a person loses his very sense of discrimination itself, he perishes. He loses his moral and spiritual sense. It is this loss of moral and spiritual sense which has caused all the ruin to modern man and he is living for sheer material gains and profits. "We notice that mind is a restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become."¹⁸

He realized if we love wealth and material objects we will lose our moral fiber. Men lost in matter cannot realize self and can not do any service to the suffering humanity.
According to Gandhi moral and spiritual freedom depends on the effective cultivation of the ancient Indian virtues of Truth and Non-violence. Moral freedom means the conquest over the demands of the senses and appetites for the realization of the self. He writes in this connection, "It is impossible to win Swaraj nonviolently unless there is self purification." Self indulgence is the cause of man's destruction. The conquest of empirical desires alone is the path to immorality. Hence Gandhi stressed upon the rigid adherence to the code of mahavrata (The eleven great vows) in his ashrantas.

The daily repetition of the vows was a deliberate attempt to strengthen one's moral resolve. It was his firm belief that the immature persons subject to fluctuations of temporary emotions and arbitrary fancies and passions could not enjoy moral freedom.

He wrote in Young India that Swaraj can never be a free gift by one nation to another. It is a treasure to be purchased with a nation's best blood. It will cease to be a gift when we have paid dearly for it. Swaraj will be the fruit of incessant labour, suffering beyond measure. At another place he said that for me the only training in Swaraj we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom, even though it may be full of defects.

Freedom, according to Gandhi is a fruit of suffering. Freedom is never arbitrary. Genuine freedom results in self denial for the sake of society. Thus genuine Swaraj is a function of the development of the moral source of power. Spiritual freedom is rising above ego and identifying one's self with the supreme being or Truth. Real freedom or Swaraj is rule over one's own self.

According to Gandhi government over self is the truest Swaraj. It is synonymous with moksha or salvation. Spiritual
freedom is the highest kind of freedom but it is difficult to attain. It requires the cultivation of *anasakti* or disinterestedness. As a follower of Bhagavad Gita, he stressed on absolute disinterestedness, complete imperturbability and a resignation to the will of God as the essence of *Karam Yoga*. Disinterestedness (*Anasakti*) is linked with the spontaneous devotion to the cause of the good of all living beings. As a *Karam Yogi* in the spirit of Bhagavad Gita, he believed in the good of all and work for what is inherently good and right without being attached to its results. Disinterestedness or desirelessness of results is meant for the concentration of energy. A *Karam Yogi* does not waste his time and energy thinking about the results and consequences of his actions. He concentrates on the efforts for the fulfillment of his duty, which is for the welfare of all.

Besides disinterestedness, the second equally important requirement for moral *swaraj* is fearlessness. According to him, Fearlessness is indispensable for the growth of other noble qualities. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* that *swaraj* won without sacrifice cannot last long. He said I would therefore like our people to get ready to make the highest sacrifice that they are capable of. In true sacrifice all the suffering is on one side, one is required to master the art of getting killed without killing, of gaining life by loosing it. He wished that India may live up to this Mantra. He believed that without being fearless one cannot think of attaining freedom. He said,

"Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man. If we grasp the fact that there is divinity within us which witnessed everything, we think or do and which protects us and guides us along the true path, then, it is clear to have any other fear on the face of the earth save the fear of God."\(^{20}\)
Fearlessness and disinterestedness or Anasakti will raise a spiritual aspirant for swaraj from self interest, greed and lust for money. Gandhi believed in the total swaraj of individual when he will rise above all sorts of bondages and limitations. Self purification is the basis of all spiritual gains. He said,

"I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English Yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any Yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to change the king log with the king stork. Hence for me the movement of swaraj is a movement of self purification."\(^{21}\)

Gandhi is known for his political activities but his politics is spiritual in essence. Moksha or spiritual liberation or freedom is to win over the animal passions in man and when man wins over the animal passions in the world around him, it is external swaraj. Internal swaraj is self purification of man and when he extends to purify the world, it is external swaraj or political freedom.

Freedom is grounded in the very nature of man. Gandhi did not consider man as an automation. According to him individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automation and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as a man will not grow horns or a tail so he will not exist as man if he has no mind of his own. In reality even those who do not believe in the liberty of individual believe in their own liberty.

Raghavan Iyer writes in his book, The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi,

"Gandhi grounded the concept of freedom in the very nature of man as an autonomous moral agent and at the same time argues that the survival of society, the
continuance of a community, was contingent upon the effective freedom of individual. Proponents of negative liberty, from Mill downwards, have justified it as man's natural right which is seen as sacred and inviolable against the claims of society. On the other hand, the upholders of the concept of positive liberty have, like Hegel made man's rationality dependent upon the fact of community and the role of the state. Gandhi however conflated the notions of the moral and social necessity of individual freedom. He incorporated the freedom into the definition of man and his very concept of society. He saw the authoritarian's position as springing from his inability to universalize the notion of freedom, his inconsistency in denying it to others while requiring it for himself.22

Like Rousseau in Social Contract, Gandhi also considers freedom as the essence of man. "If freedom is renounced man becomes an "automation." Any attempt to build a society by the negation of liberty is contrary to the very nature of man."23 Man in Gandhi's views is the central point in society. Man is a conscious, spiritual and moral agent representing the Godliness in the universe. How can we think of enslaving spirit of God? He is free. It is man himself who can rule himself. It is the man's spirit which has to rule his passions and realize the universal element in himself and in the world also. If man's mind, actions and feelings are remotely controlled by various man made institution of society, which are always fallible, all his spiritual progress will be stopped and he is enslaved like a bird in a cage. We can very well take up the example of woman in society, who has accepted this status since centuries. She had not thought of her freedom. She is not considered as a free moral agent and is
considered to be a means to man's satisfaction and gratification. She is a pawn in the hand of men and works without her own conscience. It is the reason, she spends the whole of her life without spiritual, moral and social freedom and wastes the precious gift of God, i.e because of the unjust laws made by man, which are always in favour of man and against woman. Gandhi has felt the plight of woman and tried to find out a way for her swaraj. He wanted to save her from Anyaraj i.e. rule of the other i.e. male dominance. He wrote that man, the law giver will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he has imposed upon the so called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion will be none the less effective.

At another place he said that woman must cease to consider herself as the object of man's lust. The remedy is more in her hands than in man's. She must refuse to adorn herself for men, including her husband, if she will be an equal partner with him. He says I cannot imagine Sita wasting even a single minute on pleasing Rama by physical charms.

Gandhi did not consider women to be weaker sex. According to him that there was no reason for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men. Languages proclaim that woman was half of man and by parity of reasoning man was half of woman. They were not two separate entities but helpers of each other. The English language went further and called woman the better half of man. There after, he advised women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable and unworthy restraints. All restraints must be voluntary. There was no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposed purity and reasoned resistance.
He believed that society can't progress if the condition of woman is not improved. Regeneration of woman is must for a progressive society. "The largest part of our effort in promoting the regeneration of woman should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our shastras as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women."24

But this is possible only if woman raises herself above the evils of society and the society also tries to raise her. He writes, "We will have to produce woman pure, firm and self controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from the Hindu Society as is being paid to their prototypes of Yore. Their words will have the same authority as the Shastras."25

He raised voice against all the wrongs done to woman in the name of law; tradition and religion. He was against forced widowhood, purdah, the dedication of girls to temples or devdasi's, prostitution, early marriage, the dowry system, the economic bondage and marital slavery of woman. In his writings, he commented on the various Indian books like Yajnavalkya 1-18, Manu 5-154, Manu 5-145, Atri 136-37, Vasistha 21-4, Manu 8-371, Manu 10-78. All these declare that woman is inferior to man and she should worship her husband even if he is a drunkard, suffering from physical ailments, characterless, sensual and devoid of good qualities. It is her duty and if she does not perform it or displeases him, there are many punishments in store for her, including, she should be made by the king a prey to the dogs in the presence of a big assembly of people."26 Regarding this Gandhi observe, "It is sad to think that the smritis contain texts which can command no respect from men who cherish the liberty of woman as their own and who regard her as the mother of the race."27 He said smritis are not a part of religion. They are not to be taken as the word of God or
the inspired word. He was of the opinion that, "there should, therefore, be some authoritative body that would revise all that passes under the name of scriptures, expurgate all the texts that have no moral value or are contrary to the fundamentals of religion and morality, and present such an edition for the guidance of Hindus."  

In order to liberate herself from the present conditions, woman have to come forward and work for the awakening of the consciousness of society. Towards that end she is required to be educated but being a practical idealist, he does not believe in the postponement of this work as he writes, "We can bring home to our women the sad realities of their present condition without, in the first instance, giving them any literary education."  

Woman is required to know that she is not man's slave but his companion. She is gifted with equal mental capacities. "She has the right to participate in the minutest detail of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not a result, only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have."  

For all the damage done to woman, he holds man responsible for this. They should do the penance for their neglect and ill use of woman. He assigns this duty to the educated class, educated, especially woman, to come down from the Western heights to the Indian plains to use their knowledge for the uplift of their suffering sisters. They need to do the constructive work of reform.  

According to Mahatma Gandhi woman should have legal as well as social equality with men. He wrote in Young India, "In
my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and the sons on a footing of perfect equality. As woman begin to realize her strength as they must in proportion to the education they receive, they will naturally resent the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.\(^{31}\)

Legal equality is not sufficient. As a true social scientist, he was always starting from knowing the root cause of the problem. He says, "It lies in man's greed of power and fame and deeper still in mutual lust. Man has always desired power. Ownership of property gives this power. Man hankers also after posthumous fame based on power."\(^{32}\)

Men have the might, physical, social and economic. But the dictum that might is right is not the right doctrine of life. He pleaded for *ahimsa* as the means for woman's freedom. Woman herself has to realize that she is not man's parasite. Only then her emancipation is possible. Thus Gandhi exhorts, "If only women will forget that they belong to the weaker sex, I have no doubt that they can do infinitely more than men against war."\(^{33}\)

Gandhi wanted that women should have freedom, self reliance and self confidence. She is required to know as to how to be fearless. Women is a better solider as a *satyagrahi*. She is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering. According to him bravery is not the monopoly of men. Rani Jhansi and Sita were the embodiment of moral and physical bravery. In a testing time like ours, there are two ways, i.e, "to kill or to be killed", and she should prefer to be killed than to surrender.

Fearlessness is the most cherished ideal in woman and cowardice is the biggest sin. She is required to rise above her cowardice if she wants to win *swaraj* for herself. Freedom is the very essence of both man and woman. Woman has to pay any price to attain and preserve her freedom. Freedom is essential
for each and everyone. Without freedom man is an automation. Freedom is the result of moral strength, self suffering and man's assertion for the truth. He observes his perceptions on this issue in following way "Without a large, very large, army of self sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of masses, I hold to be an impossibility. And without that progress, there is no such thing as swaraj. Progress towards swaraj will be in exact proportion to the increase in the number of workers who will dare to sacrifice their all."34

Gandhi wanted the swaraj of everyone, including women and untouchables in Indian society. Between the individual and society, the individual comes first in his thought, though society is by no means neglected. Society must provide opportunities for the maximum growth of the individual which consists in selfless service of society and willing fulfilment of his social obligations. Man is the nucleus of the entire society and the society is the organic whole. In this organic whole each individual should have the opportunities in his life to progress morally and this is possible when each man's life is harmonious in the social set up. But Indian society is an example in itself owing to the caste system and the consequent social inequalities. He decried its hypocritical distinctions of high and low. He called the caste as the tyranny which has made India turn her back and embrace falsehood. He raised his voice against untouchability and all inhuman atrocities which they were forced to bear.

Gandhi's ideas on Varanashram, caste system and untouchability have progressed with the passage of time and has categorically emphasized that we should take his later ideas to be true on any problem. He became a radical critic of casteism in the last two decades of his life, i.e. 1927 to 1947. In this noteworthy speeches on Varna at Tanjore and Trivandrum where the orthodox elements were formidable, he emphasised
on social equality with an appeal, not to Western ideas, but to the traditional Hindu concept of advaita, or the spiritual oneness of beings. Inherited superiority is the most vicious feature of caste system. This is totally inconsistent with the general and the ideal of varna in particular. His primary text of Hinduism clearly shows that the whole universe is centred in the mouth of God. Here Let us recall the two verses from Bhagavad Gita which support Gandhi's views:

“इहैकस्यं जगल्कृतन्तर सधराचरवः।
मम देवे गुरुक्षेता यज्ञान्युद्दश्यमिच्छैस।”35

Here the Lord is trying to bring Arjuna out of darkness and show him that the whole world is centred around him. Nothing is independent of him, moving or unmoving.

“तस्मात् इश्कृतस्य प्रविभक्तमनेकथार।
आपराध्येदेवदेश्य शरीरे पाण्डवलंगवः।”36

The same Truth reaches to Dharitarastra through Sanjaya who relates the Isvara form of the God. There is the body of the God of Gods, the son of Pandu then saw the whole universe resting in one, with its manifold divisions.

If everything and every man is a part of God itself, then the worship of God and treating the man, who is His part only, as untouchable, are two contradictory things. Varnasarma and caste are two totally different things “varnasarma as it is at present understood and practiced is a monstrous parody of the original. In his article "Caste has to go" he insisted that ”.... in varnasharma there was and should be no prohibition of intermarriage or interdining."38 His views on intermarriage once stretched forward, culminated in the announcement of 1946 where he observe thus: "If anybody was not prepared to marry a Harijan, Gandhi will not bless that marriage.”39 He criticised the
orthodox Hindu society for propagating caste system in a vicious manner and for their own selfish interests in the name of religion. According to him, religion is that which the scripture says and not what selfish social organizations say. We have seen what the scripture says about this.

Gandhi's interpretation of varna emphasises his dominant concern for social equality and harmony. An egalitarian domestic society, one in which no one was oppressed or driven to envy by the privileged status of another, must develop a co-operative spirit where no energy will be wasted in a competitive pursuit of material gain; it would be turned instead into some form of social service.

He conceptualizes an organic social order which is the antithesis of competition and gives its place to co-operation amongst its members. According to him:

"The four Varnas have been compared in the Vedas to the four members of the body ....... if they are the members of one body, how can one be superior or inferior to another? If the members of the body had the power of expression and each one of the them were to say that it was higher and better than the rest, the body would go pieces. Even so, our body politic, the body of humanity, would go to pieces, if it were to perpetuate the canker of superiority or inferiority. It is this canker that is at the root of the various ills of our time, especially class war and civil strife ........"

Gandhi condemned untouchability in the strongest possible terms as, "an ineffaceable blot that Hinduism today carries with it ....... It is, a curse that has come to us and as long as that curse remains with us, so long I think we are beyond to
consider that every affliction that we labour under in this sacred land is a fit and proper punishment for this great and indelible crime that we are committing."

In Gandhi's vision of non-violent village society, based on manual work, Varna Ashrama seems necessary as society cannot survive if each and every man living in it does not cooperate with others. There is no question of superiority or inferiority in any of the Varnas. He drew the attention of his countrymen to this sin which they had been committing insensitively since centuries, and said they do not deserve swaraj or freedom till they learn to give swaraj to the untouchables.

He believed that social swaraj comes prior to political swaraj. It is to be given to our enslaved brothers and sisters. If we do not give importance to the swaraj of others, we loose our moral claim of freedom from the Britishers. He wrote in this connection:

"swaraj for me mean freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. If the lot of the panchama (untouchable) is not improved when we are all suffering, it is not likely to be better under the intoxication of swaraj. If it is necessary for us to buy peace with the Musalmans as condition of swaraj, it is equally necessary for us to give peace to the panchama before we can with any show of justice or self respect, talk of swaraj. I am not interested in freeing India from the English Yoke, I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke what so ever."

swaraj is a movement for self purification of all the vices which we are carrying. He believed in the real freedom which is not only in the removal of untouchability but also in the promotion of
heart unity between all the sections of society and removal of all other social evils. He said "swaraj cannot be had so long as the walls of prejudice, passion and superstition continue to stifle the growth of that stately oak."43

Political swaraj has no meaning if India has to live with its ethnic problems. Love and harmony has to be established amongst various socio-religious groups in the society. He has warned the Hindus, being the majority group in Indian society as thus, "If the Hindus believe that India shall be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dream land. The Hindus, the mohamedans, the parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, .... their own interests. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India."44

"He does not find any cause for the inborn enmity between the two groups. The British policy of divide and rule seems to the cause behind this, as earlier they had learnt that mutual fighting was suicidal, but with the English advent quarrels recommenced."45

In views of the above, Gandhi has raised the question: "Do people become enemies because they belong to different religion? Is the God of Mohamedan different from the God of the Hindus? Different religions have different roads converging to the same point, i.e. to meet God. So religion can never be the cause of mutual quarrel between the Hindus and the Muslims.

In his book Hind swaraj he has taken up all the causes of Hindu muslim enmity. Regarding the cow protection he says, should we kill a Mohamedan in order to save the cow? We cannot save the cow by killing the Mohamedan but we can definitely save the cow as well as the Mohamedan by approaching him and urging him for the sake of the country to
join in cow protection. If he agrees then, according to Gandhi it is fine otherwise, he says I should let the cow go for the simple reasons that the matter is beyond my ability. But if you really love cow, you should sacrifice your life to save her and not to take your Mohamedan brother’s life. Mutual distrust between the two communities has to be ended. The role of Hindus in the social and ethnic harmony is very vital, being the majority by building confidence amongst the Muslims and an atmosphere of brotherhood, trust and confidence among themselves. Mutual quarrels between the Hindu Muslims should not be exaggerated. He believes that no third party should intervene and concludes like this, "..... two men fight; both have the heads broken or one only. How shall a third party distribute justice amongst them? Those who fight may expect to be injured". But this is possible only when the majority group is ethically enlightened and not motivated by self interest. In that case, even if they will fight with each other, they have to befriend themselves again.

Gandhi had a vision of an ideal democratic swaraj which he often interpreted as Ram Raj and explained his concept of Ram Rajya in these words,

"I warn my Muslim friends against misunderstanding me in my use of the word Ram Raj. By Ram Raj, I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Ram Raj, divine Raj, the kingdom of God. For me, Ram or Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of Truth and righteousness. Whether Ram of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal Ram Raj is undoubtedly one of the true democracy, in which the meanest citizens could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is
described by the poet to have redeemed justice under Ram-Raj.\textsuperscript{47}

He appealed to the Youth of India to consider themselves as the custodians of India's honour and makers of Hindu-Muslim unity. He laid so much stress on the character building of students for the attainment of the real swaraj. He wanted the students to have mastery over their thoughts and actions. According to him, self-mastery and self-control over passions lead to the real happiness. To give your heart is to give all. Students should try to get oneness in theory and practice and asked them to face death smilingly for those principles which they consider noble. They should know that life is required to be an integral whole. If there is purity of heart, there should be purity of action as well. He asked them to realize the value of physical labour and work for the welfare of millions of their unemployed countrymen by spinnings, as well as wearing \textit{khadi} as their contribution towards the attainment of swaraj.

He laid stress on simplicity among the students and discard luxuries. By being \textit{swadeshi}, he wanted to establish a living bond between themselves and millions of Indian paupers, whose children could never chance an access to the facilities for education. He wanted every man to learn the law that "to live man must work, the lesson of bread labour he learnt from Leo-Tolstoy's writings and then from 'Ruskin's unto This last' and finally, he established its unity with the Indian tradition through Bhagavad Gita. In the third chapter of Bhagavad Gita man is asked to do physical labour as an offering to God in return of all these innumerable blessings of God, without even asking for it. That beautiful verse of Bhagavad Gita is as follows:

\begin{quote}
"इनस्याभोगान्ति यो देवा दास्यते यज्ञभाविताः।
वैदेश्तान प्रदायन्यो यो भुजकते स्तेन एव सः॥" \textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}
The Bhagavad Gita's above Shloka on Yajana Gandhi explains thus, "who so ever enjoys fruits of earth, without serving the people and without having first given them their share, is a thief."\textsuperscript{49}

According to Gandhi, one who does not do physical labour is a thief. Physical work cannot be suitably substituted. The use of hands and feet is a must for leading a fruitful/healthy life. If everybody starts doing physical labour, most of the ills of our society will disappear. No man should eat another man's labour. Material possessions will not make much difference in that case. It is only the theft of labour which makes all the difference and violence results out of it. To eat another man's labour's fruit is violence. If physical labour is done religiously, there will be a welfare society. We shall automatically stop living in big houses, keeping huge collections of clothes and eating so many varieties of food, if we take a vow of manual labour, at least for our own selves. We shall start renouncing big houses, start wearing simple clothes and eat little but sattvik food. We shall stop doing all violence to others for seeking our body comforts. Such a lifestyle will automatically result in the social and economic swaraj for our own selves and for others. Such a swaraj means the unity of mankind.

Gandhi wanted equality in his ideal state. It was gross moral injustice that rich men lived so lavishly and the poor could not meet their basic needs even. The reason behind this is in equal distribution of wealth. But Gandhi fully realized that perfect equal distribution of wealth is only an attractive ideal but it can never be a practicable proposition. He therefore, substituted it with equitable distribution.

By introducing the concept of trusteeship, he has invoked the concept of Indian ideals of Non-possession (aparigraha) and non stealing (asteya) which constituted as essential part of the
cardinal virtues laid down in Hinduism, Jainism and Budhism.
The first verses of Ishopnishad gave him the full philosophy of
life in general and the theory of trusteeship in particular. The
Shloka is as fellows:

“ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं बलिकं जगत्यं जगत्।
तेन त्यक्तेन भु-आधाः: मा गृध: कर्स्य स्वद्धनम्।।”

It tells man, who is lost in physical lusts of all kinds that
nothing belongs to him. Everything is God's. So we need to have
a spirit to complete detachment towards the riches of the world.
Gandhi's says that everything belongs to God and was from
God. Therefore it was for his people as a whole and not for any
particular individual. He wanted the rich to learn the lesson of
Non-possession (Aparigraha) and Non-Stealing (Asteya) and
realize that all the wealth they are possessing, is not theirs, in
reality. It belongs to God. They are merely the trustees of that
wealth. A trustee has no right to use the wealth of the trust for his
own pleasure. Since this wealth is God's so they should use this
wealth for God's most needy persons, utilizing the trust's money
most honestly. Like a Communist, he aimed at economic equality
but he was averse to communism because it sanctions the
means of violence for securing economic equality. He wanted to
destroy capitalism but not the capitalist. He said that we should
invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on
whom he depends for the retention and the increase of his
capital.

The essence of the doctrine of Trusteeship, according to
Gandhi is that the rich man should be allowed to posses his
property without being forcibly deprived of it, but he must have
the honesty and good sense to spend the reasonable amount of
his wealth to satisfy his own needs and then act as a trustee for
the rest of his property and this remainder may be used for the
benefit of the society as a whole. He appealed to the rich to exercise self respect on their part and to reduce their needs to a maximum for the sake of the starving millions.

Gandhi believed in a non-violent social set up. But he was fearful of man's instinct of hoarding and selfishness. He warned the rich to change themselves accordingly; otherwise "a violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good."51

He wanted to bring social change by a change of heart and not by violence or coercion. The means for this are satyagraha and Ahimsa. Non cooperation and civil disobedience will force the rich to change their ways and use their wealth for the welfare of all. This is his concept of non-violent socialism.

Individual has an ontological priority as being a self conscious agent. He does not regard the groups as entities as he declared that the "swaraj of a people means the sum total of the swaraj (Self-rule) of individuals."52 swaraj is the synonymous of moksha and salvation. According to Gandhi, it is the realization of Self.

Self realization is the moral and spiritual freedom of man. Political freedom cannot make a man really free. Moral swaraj is a precondition for any other kind of freedom. Moral, social and economic freedom is prior to national swaraj. National swaraj is a part of total swaraj where as the spiritual swaraj is the total swaraj. A man who is spiritually free, nothing on this earth can enslave him. Such a man will respect the freedom of all other persons in the society, belonging to any caste,religion or socio-economic group. Gandhi wanted all men to attain this state of self realization and when all will attain such a state, there shall be pooran swaraj in the society. The first step towards swaraj lies in the individual. Resultantly Gandhi had great faith in the
Indian truth that proclaims “यत् पिंडे तत् ब्रह्मण्डे”, means "as with the individual, so with the universe" 53 is applicable here as elsewhere.

This statement carries the ancient Indian wisdom that man is the microcosom of the macrocosom. If he discovers himself, he understands the nature of reality and the structure of cosmic order. As he wrote in Young India, " ..... self government depends entirely on our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds .......... political self government for a large number of men and women ......... is no better than individual self government and therefore is to be attained by precisely same means that are required for individual self government or self rule."54

We are required to see the reasons why he lays so much stress on the individual self rule. It is the individual only who has to be persistent in his effort to be independent of collective control (state or society). All institutions holding power are fallible to the extent of doing harm, moral social, spiritual, economic and political to the individual. According to Gandhi "real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused."55 So the real problem is not in the attainment of swaraj but in educating the masses about their capacity to regulate and control the authority.

Our freedom or self rule depends entirely upon our self awareness or self respect or self discipline. He is of the notion that when the masses of the nation are awakened to a sense of their collective and individual claims to freedom, they attain swaraj. Swaraj, according to Gandhi, is when it is attained by a nation as a result of mass movement, by most of its individuals who make up a nation. He defines true swaraj as, " Poorana swaraj denotes a state of things in which the dumb begin to
speak and the lame to walk."\textsuperscript{56} Swaraj cannot be attained by force but by organization and unity. Real swaraj cannot be identified with majority rule. He did not stop at the political freedom rather he transcended it. Swaraj means simplicity and Non-possession which leads to the social and economic equality in a society. Identification with the poor in thought, word and action, is the truest way to attain social and economic swaraj and wanted the leaders of the movement also to be self sacrificing. Political swaraj requires the force of organized action based on non violence. He said, "without a large, very large army of self sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of the masses, I hold to be an impossibility. And without that progress there is not such thing as swaraj. Progress towards swaraj will be in exact proportion to the increase in the number of workers who will dare to sacrifice their all for the cause of the poor."\textsuperscript{57}

Swaraj means sarvodya in economic terms or the welfare of all and it is possible through economic equality and non-violent, independence and political freedom is merely a prelude. He clarified the concept of swaraj in a geometrical way in Harijan. He writes,

"Let there be no mistake about my concept of 'swaraj'. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence, so at one end you have political independence, at the other economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is 'Dharma, i.e., religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all....... Let us call this the square of swaraj, which will be out of shape, if any of its angles in untrue."\textsuperscript{58}
Gandhi's conception of swaraj provides a comprehensive meaning covering all essential aspects of freedom, i.e., internal freedom as moral swaraj and external swaraj as social, economic and political freedom. Without moral and spiritual swaraj all other aspects of swaraj are meaningless. He visualized a classless and casteless society, in which there are no vertical divisions but only horizontal; no high, no law; all service has equal status and carries equal wages; those who have more, use their advantage not for themselves but to serve others who have less the principle of community service replaces unrestricted, soulless competition, every body is a toiler with ample leisure opportunity and facilities for education and culture. It is a fascinating world of cottage crafts and intensive small scale farming co-operatives, a world in which there is no room for communalism or caste. Finally it is the world of swadeshi in which the economic frontiers are drawn closer but the bonds of individual freedom are enlarged to maximum limit; everybody is responsible for his immediate environment and all are responsible for society.

Dennis Dalton compares Gandhi to Plato on the concept of freedom in his book 'Nonviolence in Action: Gandhi's Power in the following words, "Gandhi was hardly the first idealist in Politics. Plato was amongst the first to argue the importance of ideals for politics, even though they might be unrealizable." Socrates, in Plato's Republic defends idealism as he asserts, "when we set out to discover the essential nature of justice and injustice and what a perfectly just and a perfectly unjust man would be like, supposing them to exist, our purpose was to use them as ideal patterns .... we did not set out to show that these ideals could exist infact... Then suppose a painter had drawn an ideally beautiful figure complete to the last touch, would you
think any the worse of him, if he could not show that a person as beautiful as that could exist."\textsuperscript{60}

Similarly Gandhi being a practical idealist knew it himself that his concept of freedom is not completely realizable on this earth. But the ideal does not lose its importance merely because it can't be realized fully, as Plato said that the beautiful painting does not lose its importance just on the ground that in actual world that perfect beauty of the painting cannot be seen.

Gandhi knew it and he concluded about his conception of India's freedom in the following words which take him very close to Plato, "I may be taunted with the retort that this is all utopian, and therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's line, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own (value) for the mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it."\textsuperscript{61}

This provides evidence of the fact that Gandhi entertained the conviction of the ideal and actual constituting one causal whole. The image of the ideal or the utopian society can be realized through praxis. However, the domain of values to be realized must be spelt out very coherently and very specifically before action or praxis can enter into the nexus of this means and ends relationship.
21. M.K. Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1949) p.120
41. M.K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* 

42. M.K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* 
   (New Delhi: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting) Vol. 24, p.227

43. M.K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* 
   (New Delhi: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting) Vol. 33, p.149

44. M.K. Gandhi, *Selected works of Mahatma Gandhi* 

45. M.K. Gandhi, *Selected works of Mahatma Gandhi* 

46. M.K. Gandhi, *Selected works of Mahatma Gandhi* 

47. D.G. Tandulkar, *Mahatma: The life of Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi* 

48. Srimad *Bhagavad Gita*, Tr. by Swami Swarupananda 
   (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1998) (3-12) p.78

49. M.K. Gandhi, *Selected works of Mahatma Gandhi* 

50. *Ishavasyopnisan*ad: Tr by Shashi Tiwari (Delhi: Bhartiya Vidyapakshan, 1986) p.5

   (Ahmedabad: Navjivan, 1967)p.318

52. Raghavan Iyer, *Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* 

53. M.K. Gandhi, *Selected works of Mahatma Gandhi* 
   (Madras: Natesan, 1934) p.409


